

COUNCIL OF COUNCILS

An Initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations



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Contents

Session One: The West, Russia, and Ukraine

- Selim Yenel, “[Putin’s Long Game](#),” *GRF Viewpoint*, January 26, 2022.
- Richard Haass, “[Is Diplomacy Between Russia and the West Still Possible?](#),” *Project Syndicate*, May 10, 2022.
- Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti, “[The Charm of Anti-Westernism: Russia’s Soft Power in Africa](#),” *SAIIA Opinion and Analysis*, May 18, 2022.
- Lars Brozus, “[G7: International Solidarity with Ukraine in Times of Aggression](#),” *SWP Point of View*, May 18, 2022.
- Ariel González Levaggi and Nicolás Albertoni, “[Latin America Reacts to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#),” *CARI Serie de Artículos y Testimonios*, Number 165, March 2022.
- Xiao Bin, “[China’s Position on the Russia-Ukraine War](#)” *China-US Focus*, April 26, 2022.
- Alina Polyakova and John Herbst, “[Ukraine Can Win: The Case Against Compromise](#),” *ForeignAffairs.com*, April 22, 2022.
- Keir Giles, “[Ensuring Ukraine Prevails Is Now the Only Moral Choice](#),” *Chatham House Expert Comment*, April 4, 2022.
- Hans-Christian Hagman, “[Geostrategic Aspects of the Ukraine War](#),” *ORF Raisina Debates*, April 20, 2022.
- Andrey Sushentsov, “[Towards a ‘Cold Peace’ in Europe](#),” *Valdai Discussion Club Expert Opinions*, May 4, 2022.
- Carl Bildt, “[NATO’s Nordic Expansion](#),” *ForeignAffairs.com*, April 26, 2022.
- Diana Ohlbaum, “[Time for a Strategic Pause on NATO Expansion](#)” *The Hill Congress Blog*, May 21, 2022.

Session Two: The Future of Global Health Security: Preparing for Emerging Pandemic Threats

- Antony J. Blinken and Xavier Becerra, “[Strengthening Global Health Security and Reforming the International Health Regulations](#),” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 326(13), August 31, 2021.
- David Heyman et al., “[A New Understanding of Global Health Security](#),” *Global Challenges Foundation*, 2021.
- Clare Wenham, Mark Eccleston-Turner, and Maike Voss, “[The Futility of the Pandemic Treaty: Caught Between Globalism and Statism](#),” *International Affairs*, Volume 98, Issue 3, May 2022.
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Helen Clark “[Transforming or Tinkering? Inaction Lays the Groundwork for Another Pandemic](#),” *theindependentpanel.org*, May 2022.

Session Three: Global Digital Governance: Is Consensus on New Rules Possible?

- Rohinton Medhora and Taylor Owen, “[A Post-COVID-19 Digital Bretton Woods](#),” *Project Syndicate*, April 17, 2020.
- Daniel Garcia-Macia and Rishi Goyal, “[Decoupling in the Digital Era](#),” *IMF Finance and Development*, March 2021.
- Robert Muggah, “[The Real-Life Risks of Our Digital World](#),” *Foreign Policy*, July 10, 2021.
- He Yafei, “[Urgent Need for Internet Cooperation](#),” *China-US Focus*, May 24, 2022.
- Cayley Clifford, “[Russia’s Efforts to Promote Cyber Norms That Serve Its Interests Gain Traction in Africa](#),” *SAIIA Opinion and Analysis*, August 25, 2021.
- Stewart Fleming and Stephen Pickford, “[Digital Currencies: Economic and Geopolitical Challenges](#),” *Chatham House Explainer*, January 29, 2021.
- Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “[The End of Cyber-Anarchy?: How to Build a New Digital Order](#),” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2022.

Session Four: Managing Growing Climate Risk

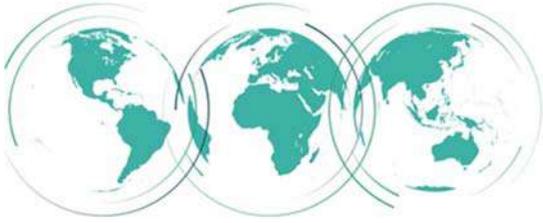
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- Stewart M. Patrick, “[To Reduce Growing Climate Dangers, the World Needs to Consider Sunlight Reflection](#),” *The Internationalist*, April 27, 2022.
- Susanne Dröge and Oliver Geden, “[Next COP Ahead: Europe Has Work to Do](#),” *SWP Comment*, January 2022.
- Shiloh Fetzek, “[Could the Ukraine Crisis Accelerate a Longer-Term Policy Shift Away From Fossil Fuels?](#),” *IISS Analysis*, March 15, 2022.
- William Nordhaus, “[Why Climate Policy Has Failed: And How Governments Can Do Better](#),” *ForeignAffairs.org*, October 12, 2021.

Session Five: The Fate of Democracy

- Richard Youngs et al., “[From Democracy Summit to Global Democratic Agenda?](#),” *Policy Paper*, Forum 2000, November 23, 2021.
- Richard Wike and Janell Fetterolf, “[Global Public Opinion in an Era of Democratic Anxiety](#),” *pewresearch.org*, December 7, 2021.
- Hal Brands, “[How to Make Biden’s Free World Strategy Work](#),” *ForeignAffairs.com*, May 24, 2022.
- Samir Saran and Shashank Mattoo, “[Big Tech vs. Red Tech: The Diminishing of Democracy in the Digital Age](#),” *ORF Commentaries*, February 15, 2022.
- Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, “[The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule](#),” *Freedom in the World 2022 Abridged Report*, Freedom House, February 2022.
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COUNCIL OF COUNCILS

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Session One

The West, Russia, and Ukraine

PUTIN'S LONG GAME

Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel
GRF President

Nobody wants to be a has-been. This is the feeling of Russia under Putin. Many are saying that we have to understand him; that the collapse of the USSR was such a trauma, the biggest catastrophe of the 20th century, and that Russia needs to be somewhat appeased or understood. What of the other countries? The liberated ones, especially in Europe. How do they feel?

Once an empire is not always an empire, although the thinking and reflexes may be harder to change. Of course, there is history and there may be lingering historical connections. Nevertheless, that is where it should rest. The end of the First World War divided and diminished the Austria-Hungarian Empire. It has been a century since the demise of the Ottoman Empire. World War II took care of the British and French empires. The Spanish and Portuguese empires have long since gone. Only those that look forward make progress, Germany being the prime example.

Empires do not come back. The hardest part is giving up on this nostalgia. There might be those that harbor such thoughts of revival but they are usually a minority. Russia is a different story. The Russian Empire collapsed, only to be re-built into the Soviet Union. But does Putin want to revive the empire or does he want its reputation - or just to be a world player as before?

We know that President Obama's comments on Russia being a regional power hit a national nerve. What added salt to the wound was the pivot to China. It must have bothered Putin much more than European leaders when the United States announced its priorities lay in the Far East.

So what does that all mean for Ukraine?

The threat is real. With small but sure steps, Russia is trying to take back what it can. It has returned to the Middle East and is trying to influence the Balkans. It knows its limits and plays the long game. It will not touch NATO. That is too much, but he will go as far as he can. As it stands, for him, Ukraine is legitimate grounds.

Putin would do well to remember the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. Parts of Ukraine may welcome Russia, but there are those that will resist. Is Putin ready for a protracted conflict that will cost Russian lives? Even during the Afghan episode, when there were other nationalities within the Soviet army fighting, the body bags returning home turned into a backlash even in such a tightly controlled state. An invasion of Ukraine will be a repetition of that period.

Will Putin grab a bit of Ukraine in the east - a piecemeal approach? Putin saw that after Crimea, it did not take too long for the EU to reach out once again to Moscow. It was semi-legitimized by explaining that it was a mistake that Crimea was given to Ukraine as a gift by Khrushchev. The breakaway 'statelets' in Georgia are too far away for the West to bother with. The turning point was the so-called red line of using chemical weapons in Syria and US reticence to act in response. Russia became emboldened and acted on it. Putin may be counting on a similar non-military reaction with only some sanctions if he grabs the Donbass.

Yet if Russia is counting on the US debacle in Afghanistan, it should think twice: Ukraine is much more crucial and a Western response is assured.

A miscalculation is always possible. Hitler saw himself as a master tactician when he went into Saarland, Austria and Czechoslovakia without any real counter response until he went too far. Putin may not be so foolish but he has also seen similar non-action in Georgia, Crimea and Donbass, as well as in Syria. So what does he really want?

Does he just wish to be treated as a global player alongside the US and China? He may have nuclear weapons and a big army, but is this sufficient for such a role? Maybe that is what he believes. It is true that hard power has swept away any last vestiges of soft power. Yet an invasion, or even threats thereof, will only mark Russia as a disruptive power.

The situation puts Turkey into an unenviable position. **President Erdoğan has already** suggested acting as an intermediary. Turkey sold drones to Ukraine, which caused Russian annoyance to say the least. Turkey bought S-400 missiles that continues to frustrate NATO. Would Russia accept to give Turkey such a role? If Putin aims for equal treatment by another global player, it will only deal with the US. French President **Macron's suggestion to negotiate with Russia separately will only feed Putin's ego**, but his real goal is sitting at the table with the US and China.

Even if this crisis is somewhat overcome in a peaceful manner, the threat of Russia will continue to hang over the West. Russia will maintain pressure in trying to divide the West by intimidation or other methods, both subtle and not so subtle. Already the distance between Turkey and the EU, as well as with the US, is helping Putin. It is not only China that looks with interest on how the West will react, but also the Balkan countries. They have been waiting too long to be part of the EU. Will the EU remain as **attractive as before if Russia's influence increases?**

The situation in Ukraine opens up so many questions and the answers will depend on how Russia is countered. If the EU is to be relevant and self-reliant, it has to overcome its differences and change its structures. It is doubtful that the Conference on the Future of Europe is up to the task. However, a crisis can also be an opportunity. An opportunity to push for changes that would be more difficult in calmer times.

Nevertheless, this is also our chance to unite once again as never before. Neither Russia nor China can be an example for global governance. Their aim is solely power. Thus, it befalls on those who truly want peace to show that they are ready for deterrence at any cost.

Is Diplomacy Between Russia and the West Still Possible?

By: [RICHARD HAASS](#)

May 10, 2022

It may well be that constructive relations with Russia do not emerge until well into a post-Putin era. But this in no way alters the West's interest in seeing that relations do not fall below a certain floor in the interim.

NEW YORK – Amid more than two months of intense media focus on the war in Ukraine, one story was largely overlooked. In late April, the United States and Russia [carried out](#) an exchange of prisoners. Russia released an American (a former marine) whom it detained some three years ago, while the US released a Russian pilot imprisoned over a decade ago on drug smuggling charges.

What makes the exchange noteworthy is that it took place at a time when Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine has brought relations with the US to their lowest point since the end of the Cold War. The US has opted to avoid direct military involvement in the war, but it is doing a great deal to affect its trajectory, including providing Ukraine with large quantities of increasingly advanced arms, intelligence, and training so that it can successfully resist and potentially defeat the Russian forces. The US has also taken steps to strengthen NATO and impose severe economic sanctions on Russia.

The war is likely to stretch on for some time. Although Ukraine's fundamental interest is to end the war and prevent more death and destruction, President Volodymyr Zelensky's desire for peace is conditional. He [seeks](#) to regain territory that Russia occupies and ensure the country's sovereignty is respected so that, among other things, Ukraine can join the European Union. He also wants those responsible for war crimes to be held accountable. 1

Russian President Vladimir Putin, for his part, [needs to achieve](#) an outcome that justifies his costly invasion lest he appear weak and be challenged at home. There is little chance that a peace could be negotiated that would bridge the gap between these two seemingly irreconcilable positions. It is far more likely that the conflict will continue not just for months, but for years to come. This will be the backdrop for US and Western relations with Russia.

One possibility for the West would be to link the entire relationship with Russia to Russia's actions in Ukraine. This would be a mistake, though, because Russia can affect other Western interests, such as limiting the nuclear and missile capabilities of Iran and North Korea, and the success of global efforts to limit the emissions that cause climate change.

The good news is that, as the prisoner exchange demonstrates, profound differences over Ukraine need not preclude conducting mutually useful business if both sides are willing to compartmentalize. But protecting the possibility of selective cooperation will require sophisticated, disciplined diplomacy.

For starters, the US and its partners will need to prioritize and even limit their goals in Ukraine. This means renouncing talk of regime change in Moscow. We need to deal with the Russia we have, not the

one we would prefer. Putin's position may come to be challenged from within (or he may succumb to reported health challenges) but the West is not in a position to engineer his removal, much less ensure that someone better replaces him.

Likewise, Western governments would be wise to put off talk of war crimes tribunals for senior Russian officials and stop [boasting](#) about helping Ukraine target senior Russian generals and ships. The war and investigations are ongoing, and the Russians need to see some benefit in acting responsibly. The same holds for reparations. 1

Similarly, although Russia will likely find itself worse off economically and militarily as a result of initiating this war of choice, the US government should make clear that, contrary to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's [remarks](#), America's goal is not to use the war to weaken Russia. On the contrary, the US should underscore that it wants the war to end as soon as possible on terms that reflect Ukraine's sovereign, independent status.

As for the war in Ukraine, the West should continue to provide support for Ukraine and prevent escalation by avoiding direct combat. The Kremlin, though, should be made to understand that this restraint is premised on its not widening the war to a NATO country or introducing weapons of mass destruction, at which point such self-imposed Western limits would disappear.

The West also should consider carefully its war aims and how to pursue them. The goal should be that Ukraine controls all its territory, but this does not necessarily justify trying to liberate Crimea or even all of the eastern Donbas region by military force. Some of these goals might be better sought through diplomacy and selective easing of sanctions. But, until Russia's behavior changes, sanctions should not just remain in place but be extended to cover energy imports that are funding the Russian war effort.

Diplomacy is a tool of national security to be used, not a favor to be bestowed, and it should continue to be pursued with Russia. Private meetings between senior civilian and military officials of Western countries and Russia should resume, in order to reduce the risk of a miscalculation that could lead to confrontation or worse, and to explore opportunities for limited cooperation.

It may well be that constructive relations with Russia do not emerge until well into a post-Putin era. But this in no way alters the West's interest in seeing that relations do not fall below a certain floor in the interim.

Opinion & Analysis | Africa & The World

The Charm of Anti-Westernism: Russia's Soft Power in Africa



Image: Getty, Da-kuk

The effectiveness — or, for that matter, the existence — of Russia's soft power has always been a controversial topic, dividing both academic and policy researchers. Now, with Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, talking about Russia's soft power may sound like fiction — even more so from Europe's perspective. However, this is not the case when it comes to Africa.

Although Russia relies heavily on force and economic power, ignoring Moscow's "power of attraction" only provides a partial vision of its power strategy. This is all the more dangerous in contexts where a country is attempting a "comeback" to return to the foreign policy stage, from which it had long been largely absent, with strategies and developments still unclear.

Such is the case of Russia's "return" to Africa, which implies there must have been a departure. Indeed, during the 1990s, Africa was no longer considered a foreign policy priority for Moscow, which was struggling with enormous domestic issues related to the USSR's collapse.

Only throughout the early 2000s, with Vladimir Putin's rise to power, Russia began its discreet comeback to the continent. This return has gained more traction in recent years, to the extent that Russia has also been trying to recover some of the Soviet Union's soft power as part of its toolkit to gradually rebuild influence across Africa.

What does Russia's soft power look like in Africa?

Common cultural soft power sources used in the West (literature, classical music, ballet) do not seem particularly influential in Africa, possibly owing to the continent's own diversity of culture and language, as well as geographical distance from Russia. Furthermore, Russia has also invested less in cultural centres compared to China, both in Africa and elsewhere.

However, Russia's declared political values – multilateralism, anti-imperialism, and non-interference – are particularly well received by policymakers across the continent, despite failing to be upheld in Russia's own neighbourhood. They relate mainly to the country's past and current anti-Western stance.

In Africa, Russia's most powerful soft-power asset relies on its image as an independent,

pragmatic, and assertive actor. Moscow's allure is based on its image as a global player that can stand up to the West, insists on domestic values against foreign interference, and is 'open for business' with all countries, regardless of their government or level of democracy.

Such anti-Western image draws — and capitalises — on Russia's Soviet past, even if the ideological element that was so prominent in Soviet times is now missing. But the Soviet legacy is also visible in the effort to influence elites through education. During the Cold War, over 50,000 African students studied in the USSR thanks to Soviet scholarships, and that is likely to have influenced alumni's worldviews and political sympathies, despite the Soviet 'defeat' at the end of the Cold War.

Today, education occupies a similarly relevant role in Russia's soft-power strategy. Over 27,000 African students studied at Russian higher education institutions in 2020/2021, roughly a fourfold increase since the 2010/2011 schoolyear.

Russia's growing media presence

A relatively novel feature is Russian media presence, chiefly RT (previously, Russia Today) and Sputnik. Both Kremlin-funded media outlets, which publish and broadcast in English, French, and Arabic, are commonly accused of spreading 'pro-Russian narratives' and were even banned from broadcasting in the EU on the 8th of March 2022. As a result, RT was removed from Multichoice's satellite television bouquet in Africa.

In the African context, common RT and Sputnik narratives range from Russia being a friendly country bringing peace and prosperity to Africa, to a more general Western bashing of former coloniser countries still engaging in 'imperialistic behaviour'. A 2018 report commissioned by both the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense finds that majority of new RT France subscribers come from the Maghreb region and sub-Saharan Africa countries and that African online news websites are increasingly relaying content from Kremlin-sponsored media. For example, many of Sputnik's articles on Africa are picked up by seneweb.com Senegal's fourth most visited site with over 1.5 million

are picked up by [Seneweb.com](#), Senegal's fourth most visited site with over 1.5 million Facebook subscribers.

Does all this automatically translate into support for Russia's policies and worldview? It's hard to say. Measuring the effectiveness of an immaterial element such as soft power can be methodologically complex.

So far, there has been a huge divide among scholars and observers: while some are optimistic about the actual leverage of Moscow's soft power in Africa, others deem it limited or non-existent. And yet the 'African dimension' of Russia's foreign policy is potentially attractive, at least to some countries' elites or social groups, especially those opposing the West and/or its democratic conditionality.

Moreover, several sub-Saharan African states find Russia a mighty and attractive provider of political and security services, useful to diversify their policy options and prevent overdependence on China or former colonisers such as France. A case in point is Mali, where Russia has largely [maintained](#) a force of about 1,000 Russian officials and instructors from the Wagner Group even after the invasion of Ukraine, which required some of these mercenaries' deployment to the Donbass region. Moreover, Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Anna Evstigneeva [said](#) that 200 Malian servicemen and nine police officers are currently being trained in Russia.

How do African states perceive the war in Ukraine?

It is interesting to look at how African states perceive the Ukraine conflict, which first erupted in early 2014, then turned into a low-intensity conflict before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine at the end of February 2022.

Initially, Ukraine made fewer headlines in Brazil or South Africa than in the EU and L with BRICS states adopting a pragmatic approach based on *realpolitik* with the objective

of not upsetting Russia. As one high-level African official told me in an interview, Africans look at the crisis through the lens of their own history of suffering at the hands of Western-inflicted mistakes.

Such readings may point to the effectiveness of Moscow's use of anti-Western narratives – particularly its image as a country boldly defending its interests against Western interference.

However, it is unclear whether the latest escalation, which is already proving to dramatically impact global oil and food prices, will change this approach.

For the time being, most African countries seem to be siding with Ukraine. At an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly held on 27 February 2022, over half of voting African countries (51,85%) supported a non-binding motion condemning Russia. However, though only Eritrea voted against the resolution, nearly a third (17 out of 54 countries, including South Africa) abstained from voting, likely not to spoil their relationship with Moscow.

While developments are still unfolding and it's too early to make assessments, the second Russia-Africa summit, scheduled for this November, will provide a good occasion to test the state of relations – and whether Russia is still attractive to African countries.

“This op-ed is based on a publication available here: [Russia's Soft-Power Sources in Africa](#)

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Lars Brozus

G7: International solidarity with Ukraine in times of aggression

Point of View, 18.05.2022



Lars Brozus

India, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa have been invited to join the G7 summit in June as guest countries by the German presidency. In → [Lars Brozus](#)' view, this provides an opportunity to strengthen international solidarity with Kyiv and discuss the upcoming G20 summit in Bali.

Adopting the slogan ➤ **“Progress towards an equitable world”**, Germany had intended to use the G7 presidency to push for collective action on important global issues such as climate change, healthy lives, sustainable development, inequality, and the defence of democracy. But this transformative agenda was suddenly confronted with Vladimir Putin's war. The meticulously planned G7 programme had to be adjusted to a new political reality. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, the German presidency has closely cooperated with the EU and NATO to coordinate numerous measures to support Ukraine. These include extensive financial and economic sanctions against Moscow as well as arms shipments to and humanitarian aid for Kyiv.

Not all governments are following suit

However, beyond the circle of like-minded states represented in the G7, the EU, and NATO, international solidarity with Ukraine has remained limited. Therefore, the selection of guest countries to be invited to join the G7 for its June summit at Schloss Elmau proved to be challenging. Only after extensive deliberations and, reportedly, ↗ **some diplomatic hiccups**, India, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa were finally officially ↗ **named as invitees**.

The delay has a lot to do with the public positioning of these countries with regard to Russia's attack on Ukraine. Since the start of the war, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted three major resolutions condemning Moscow. None of the four invitees has consistently closed ranks with the G7 by approving all three resolutions. According to the reasoning of ↗ **German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in her speech** to support the first resolution, this is tantamount to a toleration of Russian aggression. Baerbock quoted the South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize laureate ↗ **Desmond Tutu, who**, in referring to the Apartheid regime, maintained that "if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor". As the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a flagrant violation of international law, neutrality constitutes an alignment with the aggressor. However, India, Indonesia, Senegal, and South Africa are hardly alone with their preference for neutrality. Governments representing roughly half of the world population either explicitly voted against all three UNGA resolutions, abstained, or were absent.

Shadows cast over the G20

Putin's war has also cast a shadow over the G20, which includes Russia. Up to now, the G7 have only been joined by three other G20 members – Australia, the EU, and South Korea – in imposing sanctions against Moscow. This further complicated the invitation process: When the UK presided over the G7 in 2021, India and South Africa attended the summit, joining in on a statement about open societies that included a reference to an ↗ **"open and inclusive rules-based international order"**. Both countries are members of the G20 as well as BRICS, a group that also includes Brazil, China, and Russia. They thus provide an important link to the governments in Beijing and Moscow. Given their self-proclaimed neutrality, inviting them to the G7 summit this year has understandably raised concerns – but it also provides an opportunity. Russia's war of aggression will definitely play a central role in Elmau. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been present at various meetings of the G7 in the last few months. The summit could thus include a facilitated exchange between the guest countries and Ukraine – preferably in close coordination with a parliamentary track. It would be a major achievement if the guest countries were to be convinced that Kyiv needs their active support.

This would also send a strong message for the G20 summit in Indonesia, where Putin's attendance is very likely. China has already signalled that the G20 process should be kept free from political differences about the Russian invasion. Of course, the G7 should remain committed to political dialogue, especially since Australia, South Korea, and the EU share its position towards Russia. But there can hardly be "business as usual": A "family photo" with Putin cordially joining the heads of state and governments is hard to fathom. In Elmau, the G7 and the guest countries should therefore also discuss the G20 summit. The aim should be to increase support for Ukraine. That Indonesia – the G20 host and G7 guest country – invited ↗ **Zelenskyy to participate in Bali** is a positive step in this direction.

MARZO 2022

Latin America Reacts to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine**Ariel González Levaggi
Nicolás Albertoni*

The post-Cold War international order drastically changed after the Russian military intervention in Ukraine. Now Latin America must face an international order marked by competition between great powers, fragmentation, and crisis. Latin American countries' relationships with Russia will bear an additional cost. Although Moscow will lose political, economic, and diplomatic influence, observers should not overlook the Russian push to strengthen its military presence in the region.

Russia is at war. Putin is seeking a victory to strengthen his hegemony in the post-Soviet space and neutralize Western expansion. He is also using the situation to increase his approval rating –at a [historic low](#) before the crisis– to position himself for the 2024 presidential election.

Discussions in Washington have centered on a narrative of great-power competition in the past several years. Outside of a few capitals such as Moscow and Kyiv, the majority of actors on the international stage have aimed for a more cooperative world, or at least one with less emphasis on the threat or use of military force.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine changed several certainties of the post-Cold War era. This event brings us to a new period in international relations, one characterized by a renewed emphasis on military power, greater fragmentation, the establishment of *de facto spheres* of influence, and the erosion of international laws and norms. The invasion will not affect the core structures of

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globalization and interdependence, but Russia will suffer as the country decouples from the system. [Western sanctions](#) fall along these lines.

For Latin America, this geopolitical destabilization does not promote economic development, let alone the prospect of implementing an international agenda based on pragmatism and diversification. Economically, rising prices for both [energy and agricultural commodities](#) will negatively impact local economies in the middle term. Countries like Brazil will have difficulties accessing certain goods such as [fertilizers](#). At the same time, despite a historical reluctance to apply sanctions, the region will start to receive recommendations and pressure from Western countries to adhere to the sanctions and take actions on their own accord. There are not many economic incentives for countries in the region to support Russian actions. As a regional partner, Russia is not a relevant actor in Latin America and the Caribbean; currently, Russia is not even among top 30 export destinations for the region.

On the other hand, it is impossible to ignore Russia's [persistent economic crisis](#) in recent years as a key variable in this conflict. The Russian economy suffered a contraction of around 4 percent of GDP in 2020 (down from a

gain of 1.3 percent in 2019) due to a drastic decrease in exports, investment, and consumer demand. In this context, global Russian influence will suffer a big blow after this war, and Latin America will feel it.

From a diplomatic point of view, Latin America will have to calibrate what type of message it wants to transmit in this critical context. The early reactions from some Latin American countries after Russia's recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent republics were quite timid, for example, those of Brazil and Mexico. Nonetheless, after Russia's flagrant attack, Brazil and Mexico both voted to condemn Russia in the United Nations Security Council –where both countries are currently non-permanent members– and in the UN General Assembly. Relations with Russia will become a headache for those seeking a middle course between Moscow and the West.

Who is supporting Russia even in these circumstances? Its solid allies in the region: Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In past Eurasian crises such as the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 or the Ukrainian Crisis of 2014, Russia reacted assertively in Latin America, as they perceived political and diplomatic support. This allowed them to conduct “mirror

actions” in the face of perceived pressures from the West. Moscow’s shows of force included the Russian Navy’s 2008 participation in military exercises with the Venezuelan Navy, the 2008 dispatch of two Tu-160 long-range bombers to Venezuela, the 2017 opening of a counter-narcotics center in Nicaragua, and the 2019 announcement of the reopening of a communications facility in Cuba. In addition to renewing military cooperation with Cuba and Venezuela, they developed naval deployments in different ports in the Caribbean and the Atlantic Ocean. After the invasion of Ukraine, Washington seems to be ahead of the game; last week, it sent –for the first time– a nuclear submarine to conduct exercises with the Colombian Navy.

The return of the centrality of military power and the Eurasian powers’ search for zones of influence is altering Latin America’s modes of international engagement. Is it possible to have an active non-alignment strategy while global stability is at risk? What margin of action do the main regional countries have in the face of this new scenario of strategic competition? The outlook is not very encouraging.

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China's Position on the Russia-Ukraine War

Apr 26, 2022

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Xiao Bin

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The stance of China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a country in a partnership of all-around strategic cooperation with Russia, has drawn international attention since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war.

The United States and its Western allies wish China would adopt their position, but China has chosen a stance that conforms to its own interests: advocating respect for every country's sovereignty and territorial integrity; abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; proposing peace, opposing war; adhering to a common, comprehensive, collaborative and sustainable security outlook; appealing for Russia-Ukraine negotiations; and advocating benevolence and good-neighborliness. Yet not all countries are satisfied with this.

When it comes to mediating the war, China, first of all, doesn't have the kind of influence other countries may imagine. From the perspective of China-Russia relations alone, all-around strategic cooperation does not restrict Russian adventurism. Under the influence of the historical legacies of the Cold War and its desire to become the leader and center of Eurasia, Russia has strong motivation to develop relations with China and seeks to guide them in a direction consistent with its own strategic interests by means of various political norms and regulations.

Second, Russia concealed information about the war. According to information available to me so far, the Russian leader didn't reveal anything about his intentions during his visit to Beijing for the Winter Olympics. Even in his phone conversation with the Chinese leader on Feb. 25, Vladimir Putin only mentioned a "military operation" in eastern Ukraine, making no mention of any action beyond eastern Ukraine. This explains why Chinese expats and companies in Ukraine suffered different degrees of harm after the war broke out.

Third, it is impossible for China-Russia economic and trade cooperation and interdependence to become a diplomatic tool for bargaining with Russia. China is Russia's No.1 trading partner, and Russia is China's largest source of energy imports. Bilateral economic and trade cooperation is of critical significance to both parties. And with the Chinese economy under unprecedented downward pressure, stability of energy supplies is critical.

China's position on the Russia-Ukraine war is influenced by multiple concurrent factors. In international politics, as long as any country is involved in international affairs it will face various unfathomable risks, and when it has to show its position to the international community, it usually

combines the factors of facts and values, because the scope and orientation of each factor's influence are contingent on the state of the others.

As to facts, in accordance with such international treaties — the UN Charter, Budapest Memorandum (December 1994), Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China (June 2019), and Joint Statement Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Ukraine on Further Deepening the China-Ukraine Strategic Partnership (December 2013) — the Russia-Ukraine war does not conform to China's position of proposing peace and opposing war. China's leader has emphasized this repeatedly in communications with the U.S. and European Union. Yet, owing to huge differences in concrete action, the U.S., EU and some other countries are dissatisfied with China's position.

As is the case with other countries, facts are not the sole element behind China's position. Values are also at work. Under the premise that the U.S. and its Western allies take China as a threat, dodging risks is a value factor that China must take into consideration in all its foreign policy moves. Thus the risk-dodging inclination takes on significant weight in the Chinese stance. The more the U.S. and its Western allies speak of a China threat, the less likely it will become for China to synchronize with them through concrete actions.

One thing is certain: In the absence of a significant turn in relations between China and the U.S. side, the latter will have decreasing willingness to maintain a partnership.

No matter how the Russia-Ukraine war ends, Russia will lose the space for strategic defense that it had formulated with NATO before the war. European hostility will solidify against it, and it will sink itself in a new cold war featuring extremely asymmetrical factors. Meanwhile, the post-Soviet space may fragment, and instability in the Eurasian regional order will increase.

An inspiration from the war for China is that no hegemon country can persist for long because the cost of preserving hegemony will exceed its economic, military, demographic and diplomatic resources. Facing hegemonic pressure from the global regime, China should choose a philosophy that is flexible. More important, it should become a major independent force for peace — a responsible stakeholder in the international economic system and a participant in preserving justice and fairness on the stage of international politics.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ukraine Can Win

The Case Against Compromise

BY ALINA POLYAKOVA AND JOHN HERBST

April 22, 2022

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Over the past weeks, Moscow's war on Ukraine has taken a turn. After failing to seize Kyiv, Russian forces pulled back to Belarus and Russia, leaving behind a trail of civilian casualties, and regrouped in Ukraine's east with the aim of making additional gains in the Donbas. Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed General Alexander Dvornikov, also known as the "butcher of Syria," to lead his country's campaign. This week, he launched a new, more brutal military offensive in Ukraine's east.

But as the Ukrainians begin fighting against the renewed assault, Western policy is lagging behind the reality of war on the ground. Some U.S. and European policymakers are advocating for a negotiated solution to the invasion in which both sides compromise. They are doing so even though Russia has murdered, raped, and tortured thousands of civilians, and even

though giving the country control over the Donbas would mean condemning more Ukrainians to a similarly horrible fate. They are pushing for an agreement despite the fact that Russia is a bad-faith actor with a long track record of rejecting diplomatic efforts. The experience of the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics suggests that Putin would use newly occupied areas as launch pads for further attacks in Ukraine and neighboring states. A negotiated solution, even if it was possible, would not bring about peace but permanent security instability in Europe.

The West understands that Moscow is brutal and untrustworthy. U.S. President Joe Biden has called the invasion a genocide, and European leaders have publicly accused Putin of war crimes. But from the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, Western leaders have behaved as if they do not believe that Ukraine can defeat Russia on the battlefield and have instead pursued talks. Germany, for example, has shied away from providing tanks, and French President Emmanuel Macron has made multiple attempts to negotiate with Putin, saying that "there is no other way out [of the war] than a ceasefire and good faith negotiations between Russia and Ukraine." As a result, Western leaders are signaling that they would be willing to accept Russian territorial gains in exchange for an end to the invasion. Despite Moscow's stumbles, the conventional thinking goes, the Russian military is simply too big to fail.

But this assumption is false: Ukraine can, in fact, win a clear military victory. Its forces were able not just to stop Russia from reaching Kyiv; with the help of limited defensive weapons from the United States and NATO, they were able to launch counteroffensives around Kyiv, Chernihiv, and other locations in the north. Against all odds, the Ukrainian military has proved capable of doing more than holding the line; it has proved capable of forcing Russian forces to retreat.

It will be up to the Ukrainians to define the full terms of victory. As President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a recent interview, Ukraine will not give up territory in the east to end the war. At the very least, this means victory would entail an immediate return to the 2014 status quo, along with a negotiated pathway to restoring Ukraine's full territorial integrity—including the two "People's Republics." Crimea is a more difficult issue, but it is possible to envisage a settlement that leaves its status in contention. (This was how the Soviet Union and the West handled Moscow's claims to sovereignty over the Baltic states, which the Kremlin then seized in 1940.)

The West must give Ukraine the weapons, training, and cyber-support it needs to achieve these aims in the short term and sustain them in the long term. The West should do so to both help the Ukrainians and help itself. Ukraine has been valiantly fighting not just for its own freedom but for the freedom of all of Europe. The United States, NATO, and the European Union are aware of what is at stake and owe Ukraine all the support they can muster.

ROUT THE RUSSIANS

As Biden said in his historic speech in Warsaw, the war in Ukraine is not just about Ukraine—it is a battle between democracy and autocracy. But the Western policy response has not reflected the gravity of these words. Instead, the United States and Europe have been overly cautious, contradictory, and riddled by fears that they will provoke a Russian escalation. In early March, for example, the United States assessed that sending Soviet fighter jets from Poland was an escalation and ruled it out. Yet at the same time, it decided that sending tanks from NATO allies was not, and the Biden administration agreed to help transfer them. Similarly, Washington has seemingly decided against sending U.S. air defense missile systems directly to Ukraine. But when Slovakia transferred an S-300 missile

system earlier this month, it solicited little response from Moscow except a claim that Russian forces had destroyed it.

Thankfully, there are signs that—at least on security assistance—the United States is becoming more assertive. Washington has already provided more than \$3 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since February 24. On April 10, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the Biden administration would take “aggressive action” to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield. In the days that followed, the White House announced two \$800 million package of direct military support, for the first time providing armored personnel vehicles and I-155 artillery, heavy weapons that the Ukrainians have requested for weeks and that will be critical on the front lines.

These are steps in the right direction, but Ukraine needs much more if it is to have a chance of pushing Russia back in the east. Concretely, this means that the administration must move quickly and in coordination with allies to provide Ukraine with more of the weapons it is requesting, especially long-range drones, air missile defense systems, fighter jets, and bombers.

Ukraine’s greatest weakness has been in air defense, which has allowed Russia to decimate Ukrainian cities. The United States and NATO have said that they will not enforce a no-fly zone because it would put NATO forces in direct confrontation with Russian ones, but the alliance should not rule out a limited no-fly zone with clearly stipulated rules of engagement aimed at protecting humanitarian corridors. Despite concerns that a no-fly zone of any kind would lead to direct confrontation with Russia, escalation is not inevitable if NATO clearly defines the scope of the operation—security for humanitarian passages in very limited geographic areas—and communicates this publicly and privately to Moscow. At the very least, allies should provide

Ukraine's forces with the ability to impose a no-fly zone themselves over the country's own airspace.

Europe, in particular, must do much more to supply weapons to Ukraine. The European Union has committed 1.5 billion euros in security assistance since the February invasion, but that pales in comparison with the 35 billion euros the bloc has paid Russia for energy over the same period of time. Germany has ostensibly committed to sending more heavy weapons to Ukraine, but it has yet to deliver any, and it does not have a clear timetable for doing so. Indeed, German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht has said that weapons deliveries from government sources have reached their limit and that it will not send tanks to Ukraine because it is afraid of depleting its stock. Other allies who are willing to send Soviet-era, heavier weapons have also raised concerns about depleting their military reserves and are looking to the United States for replacements.

Ukraine's ability to defend itself, then, hinges on Washington's ability to ensure supply lines not just to Kyiv but also to allies on NATO's eastern flank. The United States will need to establish channels to all these countries in a way that is consistent, sturdy, and deep. In his testimony to Congress, General Mark Milley, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the House Armed Services Committee that he expects the war in Ukraine will be a long-term conflict spanning years, and so Ukraine must have a steady supply of arms for its immediate needs and to ensure it has the ability to defend itself in the future. Washington will need to ramp up military production, reduce delays in foreign military sales, and work with allies to increase their production capacities of lighter weapons and supplies—such as body armor and spare parts. It may also need to train Ukrainians to maintain and fly F-16s and operate other Western-made weapons systems. NATO also has a key role to play in replacing weapons and conducting

training. The alliance can and should create a mechanism for gathering and distributing resupplies from and to member states. It must also establish a hub, perhaps in Poland or Romania, where it can provide training to Ukrainian forces on how to use new equipment.

But helping Ukraine win will require more than just military support. Putin claims that the West's policy of "economic blitzkrieg" on Russia has failed. The United States and Europe should prove him wrong by quickly ramping up economic sanctions on Russia, which are currently not strong enough to have an immediate effect on the military trajectory of the war. Washington should impose secondary sanctions on Sberbank, Russia's top bank, which might force countries and firms currently doing normal business with Russia to curtail their exposure. And the United States and its allies must fully sanction all of the ten largest Russian commercial banks—including Gazprombank, which handles energy transactions for the gas monopoly Gazprom.

Targeting Gazprombank and Gazprom is especially essential. The ultimate Achilles' heel of the Russian economy is energy exports, which fuel Putin's war chest. Lithuania has become the first European country to stop imports of Russian gas, and Poland announced that it will end Russian coal imports within the next few weeks and phase out oil and gas imports by the end of the year. The rest of the continent is slowly coming along; in response to the atrocities in Bucha, the European Commission proposed a ban on Russian coal imports. Although this is a good start, as long as gas continues to flow from Russia to Europe, the continent will remain beholden to Moscow. The United States must pressure Europe to end its energy dependence more quickly. This won't be easy, given how reliant the continent is on Russian gas. The EU economy will take an immediate hit for ending this relationship, but the hit to Russia will be exponentially greater.

Finally, the United States must deploy cyberoffense capabilities to disrupt Russia's military campaign. Ukraine's cyberdefenses—much like its overall defenses—have performed far better than anticipated, repelling denial of service attacks and identifying malware before Russia could deploy it. Ukraine has also mobilized an army of independent cyber-hacktivists to attack military and critical infrastructure targets in Russia. And Washington sent out “cyber-mission” teams in the lead-up to the war to support Ukraine's cyberdefense capabilities. But the United States can do much more to bolster Ukraine's offensive capabilities while covertly deploying U.S. assets to jam Russian military communications on the battlefield, especially weapons systems' communication links, and disrupt day-to-day financial operations in Russia. This would effectively force Russia to fight a war on two fronts—one on the literal battlefield and the other in the cyber-domain—further depleting the government's resources.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

Winning in Ukraine won't be cheap, materially or politically. The United States will need to spend more than the \$14 billion that Congress committed to Ukraine last month to achieve all these aims. It will need to pressure its allies in Europe. And it will have to manage more nuclear saber rattling from Moscow by sending clear messages about what Washington will do if Putin resorts to using nuclear weapons in Ukraine, rather than constraining itself by promising not to take certain steps.

Although the United States must consider Moscow's nuclear capacity as it formulates policy, the country cannot be deterred by Putin's bluffs, as it sadly has been. (The Biden administration, for instance, ruled out sending MiGs to Ukraine as too “provocative.”) It is dangerous if the Russian president believes he can use these weapons to intimidate the United States from defending its allies and interests, especially because Putin's objectives go well

beyond establishing control in Ukraine. In his long speech before launching the February 24 offensive, Russia's president made clear that he would like to have sway over all the states in the former Soviet Union, including NATO members in the Baltics. If Putin can successfully frighten the United States and win in Ukraine, he will feel emboldened. The likelihood of a Russian offensive against a NATO member will then increase significantly, as will the risks of an even greater international catastrophe. The costs of defeating Putin in Ukraine may be high, but they are far lower—and far less risky—than the costs of defeating him in Estonia.

Ukrainians will, of course, pay the ultimate price for victory. The more they resist and fight back, the more that Putin will work to inflict greater pain on civilians and destroy the country's infrastructure. But as the country's response to recent Russian actions in Bucha shows, the Ukrainians are a difficult people to break. The more brutal the Kremlin's tactics get, the more the Ukrainian people are willing to fight for their homeland. So long as they believe that they can win, they will sacrifice a tremendous amount on behalf of Europe. Ukraine's allies are morally obligated to support their efforts.

They are also strategically obligated to help; there is more in this war for the West than just creating a Ukraine whole and free. If Ukraine can win, the ultimate result will be a weakened Russia, without the military capabilities to launch further aggression against neighboring states. This is by itself an essential outcome. Russia's war in Ukraine is the greatest threat to the transatlantic alliance in decades, and defeating Moscow is critical to protecting global security. It is also important for protecting liberal values and ideals. At a time when democratic institutions are under stress, a resounding win in Ukraine would be a victory for democracy over authoritarianism—a chance to revitalize liberalism, as the Biden administration aims to do.

Creating more “frozen conflicts” (which are never actually frozen) is not the answer in Ukraine. The United States has a window of opportunity to shift the trajectory of the war in the country so that Russia is forced not just to stop but to fully retreat. This will require swift action and resolute vision, with a laser-beam focus on victory. Now is not the time for handwringing and timidity.

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Ensuring Ukraine prevails is now the only moral choice

Emerging reports of a pattern of Russian atrocities show why Ukraine must fight to liberate its occupied areas, and why the international community must help.

EXPERT COMMENT 4 APRIL 2022 — 3 MINUTE READ

Keir Giles

Senior Consulting Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme



The patterns of behaviour by the occupying troops now emerging as Ukraine liberates areas around Kyiv have direct implications for how the war between the two countries can – and must – be ended. It is now harder for Ukraine’s friends and supporters to ignore what Ukrainians – and other countries bordering Russia – have known from the start: that they are defending themselves against a war of annihilation.

Organized mass murder of civilians in the occupied areas of Ukraine is not only a natural function of the manner in which [Russia fights wars](#)[↗]. It also flows entirely logically from the image of Ukraine that has been relentlessly inculcated by [Russian domestic propaganda](#)[↗] over the course of a decade.

Ordinary Ukrainians with a belief in their own country and its independence from Russia upend the entire foundation of what Russians have been told about Ukraine, simply by inconveniently existing.

The atrocities Russian troops commit as part of Moscow's genocidal assault must be turned into Ukraine's most powerful weapon for winning the war, by ensuring its Western friends find no excuse for slackening munitions support[↗] or pushing Kyiv to make concessions[↗] in order to end it.

Despite the ongoing destruction of Ukraine's economy and the appalling trauma to innocent civilians under direct occupation or indirect shelling and blockade, paradoxically the greatest danger for Ukraine is an end to the fighting at this point[↗]. Emerging evidence of how the civil population is suffering makes it all the more vital to liberate Russian-held areas[↗]. But this is far from the only danger a ceasefire would bring.

The risks of a ceasefire

A suspension of the war would inevitably slacken the pressure on Western politicians to support Ukraine, whether with military supplies, through keeping sanctions in place or raising the costs to Russia. A notional peace would allow those that wish to, once again to turn their backs[↗] on the conflict and the ongoing challenge from Russia.

“

Russia's hasty reinvention of its initial war aims, and the pivot of both its forces and its aspirations away from the conquest of the whole of Ukraine toward far more limited goals in the east of the country, constitute a recognition that Russia has failed

Meanwhile it is primarily Russia that would benefit from the breathing space a ceasefire would provide. Russia knows that it needs a break in the fighting to regroup, to conduct its reorganization of its forces to focus on the eastern front without interference from Ukraine and, most of all, to bring in additional manpower to reconstitute its mauled fighting force[↗] for a fresh offensive.

Now the Russian military understands the nature of the war it has started, it would be able to start afresh far better organized[↗] for fighting it. But it also knows that Ukraine's supporters will still be keen to grasp any opportunity to end the fighting, including through pressuring Kyiv

into accepting highly disadvantageous ceasefire terms[☞]. And of course, if Ukraine resists this pressure, Russia has the advantage that Kyiv then seems the unreasonable party.

To achieve that, Russia might well be willing to at least give the appearance of compromising on some of the disagreements between the two sides. But this would in all likelihood be a sham designed to deceive those Western partners that are prepared to ignore all previous experience[☞] of Russian ‘ceasefires’ in order to pretend to themselves - and to Kyiv - that this time Russia might be negotiating in good faith.

It follows that a temporary ceasefire sets the worst possible preconditions for a sustainable peace settlement, including through the ever-present risk of ‘temporary’ ceasefire lines becoming more permanent divisions within Ukraine in a new frozen conflict, ready to be defrosted at a time of Russia’s choosing.

And the greatest danger for Ukraine lies in well-meaning European partners, appalled at the horrors being inflicted, pressing President Zelenskiy to accept Russian offers that appear reasonable to Western politicians but whose implementation would be toxic for Ukraine’s future as an independent state – in exactly the pattern repeated through ceasefires in Georgia, Syria and Ukraine itself under the Minsk accords.

How much does Putin know?

Meanwhile the biggest obstacle to achieving a peace settlement between Russia and Ukraine that is instead both feasible and durable lies not on the battlefield, nor even at the negotiating table, but in Vladimir Putin’s mind.

It is clear Russia launched this war on the basis of assumptions about Ukraine and Ukrainians that were rooted in fantasy[☞]. The defining factor for whether Russia can now engage in a meaningful conversation about how to end the conflict depends entirely on the extent to which that fantasy has now been brought to earth by the reality of Russian military failure[☞].

“

Despite the ongoing destruction of Ukraine’s economy and the appalling trauma to innocent civilians under direct occupation or

indirect shelling and blockade, paradoxically the greatest danger for Ukraine is an end to the fighting at this point

Putin cannot fail to have realized that Ukraine did not fall into his hands in a matter of days as anticipated. The question now is why he thinks that is – and whether his understanding of Russia’s inability to meet its military goals reflects the real situation, or whether he is still insulated from it by his preconceptions and the failure of those around him to temper them with inconvenient facts².

Putin’s understanding of what is happening will determine what Russia thinks is an acceptable outcome to the war – and so in turn will determine the real success or failure of peace talks and any eventual genuine peace agreement.

Russia’s hasty reinvention of its initial war aims, and the pivot of both its forces and its aspirations away from the conquest of the whole of Ukraine toward far more limited goals in the east of the country, constitute a recognition that Russia has failed. But it may not mean Putin recognizes that Ukraine could cause Russia to keep on failing – and therefore leave Moscow even further from achieving its original aims.

What might Russia accept?

Russia’s initial aims have gradually fallen away or been abandoned as they have been shown to be entirely unrealistic. Talk of the nonsensical ‘denazification’ of Ukraine is now only for domestic consumption², and seizing control of the whole of Ukraine – or even the country east of the Dnipro – is now a distant prospect so long as Ukraine can hold the line against Russia’s eastern offensive.

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So Russia will seek to salvage what it can from the war. But here too the danger lies not in the reality of how the conflict ends, but how Putin perceives it[↗]. If he comes away from the war convinced that it has achieved even partial success, this will only embolden him to undertake the next step in his plan to reverse what he has called the ‘catastrophic mistakes’ that brought the Russian Empire to an end 100 years ago.

The bottom line is for Russia this is not ‘the war’ – instead it is the first of the wars of reconquest in Putin’s campaign to bend reality to match his historical fantasies[↗]. That means that a successful outcome to the fighting in Ukraine is critical not only to Ukrainian statehood, but to the future security of Europe as a whole.

And that in turn means the only way to secure Europe is to ensure Ukraine prevails – and is not subjected to a flawed and unworkable peace settlement that does no more than postpone its reckoning with Russia, while continuing the suffering of the Ukrainian people under occupation.

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Geostrategic Aspects of the Ukraine War

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April 20, 2022

What awaits the world in the aftermath of the Ukrainian war as years of trust and cooperation to tackle global challenges have been dismantled?

This brief is a part of [The Ukraine Crisis: Cause and Course of the Conflict](#).

Although only two months have passed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine commenced, the impact has, indeed, been global on several levels. The world has been reminded of the horrors of war, of the heart-wrenching civilian plights and that some states must fight for their sovereignty, freedom, and right to exist.

This war has mobilised the world and digitised it: Right versus wrong, democracy versus authoritarianism, globalisation versus protectionism, and victory versus defeat. The world has become even more polarised. This may be a necessity in war, but it will tie the knots of international cooperation even harder. Sooner or later, when the war ends, those knots must be undone, and we must get back to fixing global problems, equalising imbalances, and undoing injustices. And yes, we will all need to compromise for the greater good. In democracies, it is the interest of the common voter, and a stable strategic context in which she/he can prosper, that counts. Untying knots and getting all, including the public, to accept compromise for long benefits, will not be easy.

Russian global standing

It is rare for major global players to make such big mistakes that challenge their very global standing and even their future prospects. The Suez Crisis in 1956 was a bridge too far for France and the United Kingdom; the French, and the American military engagement in Vietnam did nothing for their status as noble or major powers; nor was the 2003 Iraq invasion a boost for the US legitimacy or supremacy. It took the erstwhile Soviet Union 10 years to concede that Afghanistan was a failed mission.

For Russia, a UN P5 member with the world's largest nuclear arsenal, the fourth largest defence budget (although 20 percent smaller than India's) and being last year the sixth biggest economy (in PPP; less than half of India's or a sixth of China's, and even less in nominal terms), its miscalculation will have geostrategic consequences.

In the eyes of the West, Russia has lost the moral authority, soft power, and international credibility it once had. The excessive use of force and the sheer brutality seen in Ukraine have shocked almost all observers. Economic sanctions have deprived Russia of both trade, income, and growth. Who will want to be associated with or invest in Russia after this? Who will want to trust or be dependent on Russia?

Surprisingly the Russian military has so far underperformed by almost every parameter. Historians will debate whether it was due to failed political calculations, corruption, poor planning, and morale or just bad tactics that explained the severe losses and crude destructive tactics—at least in the initial phases. Russia did not even secure air supremacy or adequate intelligence of the Ukrainian forces and obviously misjudged

their willingness to fight, the people's power, and the amount of support and sympathy Ukraine would get from most countries in the world.

The result is not just that Russia will have depleted a significant portion of its military equipment, exposed flaws in its operational concepts, and lost credibility. The main impact is that for the foreseeable future, Russia will be seen as an aggressor and a brute. Should Russia use weapons of mass destruction, the stain will be even worse.

This war will leave Russia poorer, more alienated, and probably more dangerous.

US capacity to mobilise

The US has so far played the strategic chessboard with impressive efficacy. For all the internal challenges facing the US and the Biden administration, its global posture has been boosted thanks to its active role in Ukraine.

Although unwilling to go to war with Russia and risk nuclear escalation, the US has done most things right and deployed an array of hybrid warfare tools. It trained the Ukrainian military and developed its cyber capacity long before the invasion, and whole sanctions packages were prepared and pre-cooked with the Allies. The level of intelligence sharing and exposing Russian intentions/options was skilfully managed. Since the start of the war, the level and quality of donated military hardware, intelligence coordination, secure command and control, and cyber operations have made a huge difference.

It is obvious that President Zelenskyy is receiving well-balanced and excellent advice from his staff in everything from speech writing and diplomacy to media management.

The US has also dominated the media and information war. By barring Russian media (and with help from US Big Tech and social media platforms) the US/western narrative has dominated the airwaves in most countries. Russian flaws, mistakes, and tragedies have been amplified, as have the Ukrainian leadership, heroics, sacrifices, and losses.

It is also a fact that the US, being the world's largest oil and gas producer, is benefiting from high energy prices (although unpopular amongst voters) and increased European dependency on US LNG.

The US is again seen as the natural leader in the West and the signals to China could not be clearer.

However, one wonders what it will take to lift the economic sanctions. Will the West be able to live with future compromises between Ukraine and Russia? Russian capitulation seems unthinkable and even defeat will be a matter of interpretation. Would it theoretically be enough for President Putin to step down or must the inner circle also be replaced? There is a risk we are underestimating the power and influence of the Russian military, intelligence, and force structure elites, just as we underestimate the Russian national myths and narratives. A democratic transition in Russia may be a pipe dream, but most would welcome a peaceful, harmonious, prosperous, and thriving Russia.

We must also remind ourselves that the US administration can change. The impact of President Trump on global and European security cooperation was momentous.

European security shock

In the words of the UN Secretary-General, the Russian invasion of the sovereign territory of Ukraine is a violation of the UN Charter. In European eyes, this unprovoked aggression has fundamentally changed the European security situation and challenged the existing order.

The war has united the EU and NATO in a way no other crisis has. Although internal European challenges remain, they have been put in perspective now that European countries face an existential threat. EU cohesion and new momentum should not be underestimated.

US military engagement has been all the more welcome, and we shall have to see how NATO's new strategic concept (presumed to be launched in June 2022) is shaped by the new European security situation. Just the fact that there is a debate in Sweden and Finland about NATO membership, several of the Baltic and Eastern European states are calling for more permanent US basing, and the outpour of support for Ukraine is surely not what President Putin had hoped for.

European dependency on Russian energy and European dependency on the US is surely painful for some to acknowledge. We shall have to see if European investments in their own security will make them more or less dependent on US security and equipment. We shall also have to see if Europe is prepared to support the US, for example in Asia, in the same way the US has shored up Europe in 2022. After all, there is no such thing as a free lunch.

Trade and prices

The world is already facing increased protectionism on multiple fronts, plus US–Chinese trade wars and the aftermath of COVID's abnormal ramifications on supply, value chains, and demand. The Russian invasion has had a significant negative effect on commodity prices, especially in the food, energy, and mineral sectors. Again, there are relative winners and losers. US farmers are having a good year, and Australia, Norway, and the Gulf States are prospering with high prices. Countries heavily dependent on Russian/Ukrainian grain, fertiliser, wood, or who have cut their energy ties, have paid a heavy price.

Chinese lessons

The war over Ukraine is a major headache for China. Surely Beijing must be drawing substantial lessons from this crisis. The power of the dollar, if the US, Europe, and Japan unite, has been formidable. The Renminbi only represents 2.5 percent of the global currency reserves and has considerable assets in western currencies and the US debt. Ukrainian public support, resilience, and the ability to fight a superior enemy will be noted.

On the military front, one must draw the lesson that if a defender [think Taiwan] is supported by high moral, superior intelligence, sound political advice, and advanced defensive weapons, resistance can be forceful and successful. And besides, unlike Ukraine, it is relatively easy to disrupt supplies and air/sea control in the Western Pacific. However, China is the world's biggest economy, the biggest investor in green tech and AI and has the second-largest defence budget. Any US–Chinese conflict would be more globally disruptive and dangerous than the war for Ukraine.

Even if Russia still has some advanced technology and spectacular unconventional assets, Russian strategy, logistics, and political control, not to mention some poorly performing weapon systems, must lead to some soul searching by its SCO partner.

Only time will tell if authoritarian control of the media, propaganda, isolation, and patriotism can deliver more stability, prosperity, and happiness for a country such as Russia. From an outside perspective, it seems rather implausible.

China is grappling with the pandemic, slowing growth, demographic pressure, increased isolation, and the lead up to the 20th National Congress. China is stuck with a partnership with “no limits”, a Russian war of aggression, interference in the internal affairs of a neighbour and a rival country, the US, that does its best in linking China with Russia. It is far from the desired state of stability and predictability. Although this situation is highly problematic for Beijing, China, and indeed India, have influence in Moscow. We may hope that China and India can use their weight to mediate and temper Russia.

Global challenges

The war gives further impetus to convert to sustainable alternatives. Many countries that have imported oil/gas/coal from Russia are trying to diversify. But that comes at a price and few alternatives are in the short term carbon-free.

Perhaps the biggest loss incurred, apart from the tragic civilian losses in Ukraine, are the global cooperation patterns and the willingness and ability to tackle global challenges. Already we are having awkward debates on who will attend what G20 meeting or regional constellations, and the UN Security Council is hardly “fit for purpose” these days. The fact of the matter is that China and the US, and often India, EU, Japan, and Russia, are needed in almost every strategic discussion from climate management, renewables, anti-microbial resistance, rare earths, ocean management and space coordination. A toxic environment, already poisoned by protectionism and zealous patriotism in the US–Chinese relations, will make it difficult, if not impossible to find compromise and long-term solutions amongst the major players. The risk is that large parts of South Asia and Africa will pay the highest price for many of these global challenges.

Technology—to a degree

On one hand, the war has not had an influence on the greater technology trends. Quantum computing, synthetic biology, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are still potentially revolutionary technologies. Silicon Valley is still awash with capital and innovative power, Shenzhen is buzzing, and there is no proof of China slowing down its ambitions to compete. If anything, one can observe a degree of de-globalisation and more focus on self-reliance. In many ways that means lower degrees of efficiency, higher prices, and probably lower growth.

On the operational side, the Russian offensive has been surprisingly low-tech and more akin to the experiences of the Chechen wars. On the contrary, the combination of US/European hybrid warfare with a determined and western-equipped Ukrainian force has delivered some impressive results.

Perhaps, with mass sensors, smartphones, digital exposure, and both military and civilian high-resolution satellite and drone imaging, and massive coordination, the new surprise is that everything is open and observable. The ability to hide a mobilisation or an atrocity is no longer possible. With the combination of high-quality intelligence and the efficiency of man-portable and autonomous weapon systems, mobile precision surface-to-surface missiles and “the small, smart and many”, the main battle tank, stationary artillery and large naval surface combatants are becoming obsolete.

On a final note

The war over Ukraine has no real winner. It exposes the best and the worst of human nature but ultimately, it dismantles trust, cooperation, and the ability to solve global challenges. Global norms and international rules are thwarted by one of the guarantors. Disruption, shortages, and destruction will come at a significant global cost. And Russia will not go away, whatever the outcome. The challenge today is to minimise the damage, accept compromises without selling our souls, and undo the knots of conflict for the greater good.

MODERN DIPLOMACY

EXPERT OPINIONS

Towards a 'Cold Peace' in Europe

05.04.2022

Andrey Sushentsov

We must admit that the new security system in Europe will be based on mutual hostility. But this will be a variant of hostility that precludes provocative behaviour. Such behaviour is possible only in a situation where no one believes that the other side will attack you, writes Valdai Club Programme Director [Andrey Sushentsov](#).

Over the past decades, the need to take into account Russia's interests has steadily declined in the West. "Gas station pretending to be a country" and "a regional power" are just some examples of the Western approach to Moscow's politics. In other words, the image of Russia as a "paper soldier" – a country that is in systemic decline – was gaining popularity.

According to the West, as a vanishing strategic entity, Russia will not resist any US military or strategic decisions regarding Europe; the main thing is to give Russia bad news piece by piece. As early as 2008, then US Ambassador to Moscow William Burns wrote that three key US decisions in Europe – recognising Kosovo's independence, endorsing NATO membership plans for Georgia and Ukraine, and deploying US missile defence systems in Europe – could not be successful if they would be presented to Moscow at the same time. "I believe that we can only manage one of these three upcoming crises without causing real damage to relationships that we cannot afford to ignore. I would choose to move decisively on the issue of Kosovo; postponement of the MAP for Ukraine or Georgia; direct talks with Putin while he is still in office to try and get a deal on missile defence."

The system of relations between Russia and the West, which existed before February 24, included one major distortion. We were participants in an interdependent relationship based on Russia's participation in the global economy, which was centred on the West. It was believed that Russia's interest in participating

in this system was much more significant than Moscow's interest in ensuring its security. The outcome of the escalated drama consisted of one of two alternatives: either Russia would accept such a relationship and silently move into the second league of world politics, or the accumulated tension would explode into a major crisis.

Over the past few years, military episodes have taken place every week in the perimeter of Russia's western borders, whether there were military vessels engaging in dangerous manoeuvres, encounters between military aircraft, unscheduled exercises and other provocations. The Western media drew the contours of an almost pre-war situation. For example, Spanish military aircraft were stationed in Lithuania last summer, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was invited to view them. Together with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda, he [gave a joint press conference](#) in front of the hangar where these aircraft were based. At that moment, a combat alarm sounded, it was announced that the aircraft needed to leave the hangar to intercept a Russian fighter. Of course, all this was done for PR and the media.

After February 24, the NATO countries abruptly stopped all such provocative military activities along the perimeter of our borders – the realisation came that Russia is capable of a military response. But it has also become clear that the only real security player in the West is the United States, which is now arranging arms shipments to Ukraine but says it does not seek to escalate the crisis.

The Russian reaction to Ukraine's relations with the West has always stood out against the background of other countries of the post-Soviet space. The peculiarity of Ukraine is that it is the only border country in Europe which poses a potential danger for Russia: it has a large population, formidable armed forces with modern weapons, a lot of social energy and the ideological motivation to oppose Russia. For us, relations with Ukraine are analogous to India's relations with Pakistan. These two countries were born simultaneously in the process of the collapse of the British Empire. For Pakistan, the confrontation with India was a formative experience that determined the nature of the domestic policy of that country, the central role of the military establishment and intelligence, and programmes to create nuclear weapons and prepare terrorists to commit acts of sabotage in India. It also led to constant local border wars with India and the special nature of foreign policy alliances.

The costs of a protracted confrontation with a militaristic Ukraine would be significant for Moscow. Suppose, for example, that the predictions of the Russian military establishment turned out to be correct, and within a short time Ukraine would develop a "dirty bomb". At the same time, the process of rearmament of the army would continue in full swing – and after some time, not 120 thousand well-armed soldiers, but 300 thousand would be concentrated in the east of the country. Over 40 million people live in the country, and the military budget of Ukraine is about 6% of GDP; this level of military spending is comparable to that of Israel. Weapons from the West entered the country on a large scale; Western military instructors prepared the best Ukrainian units. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – young men with combat experience – participated in the so-called anti-terrorist operation in Donbass. The Ukrainian army is the third largest in Europe after those of Russia and Turkey. The goal of the military return of Donbass and Crimea has never been discarded.

The use of force by Russia in Ukraine creates a new negotiating reality. The old formula of Western politicians that "Russia is on the wrong side of history. It has its own version of developments, but we will disregard it," really exhausted its meaning. It became clear that this was not just a "version of developments", but a demanding negotiating position aimed at creating a security system in Europe that takes into account

Russia's interests. After such a large-scale shake-up, all the dust will settle, which previously prevented us from understanding the real outlines of European security problems.

We must admit that the new security system in Europe will be based on mutual hostility. But this will be a variant of hostility that precludes provocative behaviour. Such behaviour is possible only in a situation where no one believes that the other side will attack you. After the outbreak of hostilities on February 24, there is no such belief among the NATO countries anymore. On the one hand, this will entail an increase in the military spending of European states and a change in the geography of the forward deployment of NATO forces and assets. They will be closer to Russia's borders. But, on the other hand, there will be an increased responsibility for the use of these forces and means. Any incident will provoke a crisis that does not correspond to the vital interests of European states. The result of the system of checks and balances will be a "cold peace" – the best possible option for today.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NATO's Nordic Expansion

Adding Finland and Sweden Will Transform European Security

BY CARL BILDT

April 26, 2022

CARL BILDT is Co-Chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations and former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Sweden.

Before Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, the question of NATO membership was barely part of the political debate in Finland and Sweden. Both countries have a long history of military nonalignment, and although they have gradually pursued closer cooperation with the United States and NATO—and politicians in both countries have long advocated membership—NATO accession was hardly seen as a pressing issue.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine changed all that. In response to Russian aggression, both countries are reassessing their security policies, and seeking NATO membership is rapidly emerging as the most realistic option. Recent polls show that clear and increasing majorities in both countries support joining the alliance. In addition, both countries have delivered substantial amounts of weapons to Ukraine, including 10,000 man-portable antiarmor weapons from Sweden.

By invading Ukraine, Putin sought not only to bring that country back under its influence but to also change the security order of Europe. On the latter point, he has succeeded—just not in the way he likely intended. Russia’s assault has unified NATO and made its expansion much more likely. If Finland and Sweden join the alliance, as they look poised to do, they will bring substantial new military capabilities, including advanced air and submarine capabilities, that will alter the security architecture of northern Europe and help deter further Russian aggression.

ARMED NEUTRALITY

The Nordic countries are similar to one another in many respects, but they have pursued very different security policies since World War II. To a large degree, these differences reflect the neighbors’ different experiences during the war. Denmark and Norway sought neutrality, but were occupied by Nazi Germany in 1940. Finland initially rebuffed a Soviet invasion in the Winter War of 1939–1940. Later, it found itself fighting on Hitler’s side until it could extricate itself from the war. Sweden alone among Nordic countries escaped the horrors of war and occupation with a policy of neutrality designed to ensure its survival. That this policy succeeded was largely because Hitler’s military calculus didn’t require the acquisition of Swedish territory; he could achieve his objectives in the area by other means.

After the war, Sweden contemplated forming a Nordic defense union with Denmark and Norway. But negotiations broke down, mainly because Norway believed that only an alliance with the Anglo-Saxon maritime powers could guarantee its security. Sweden wasn’t ready for such alliance, in part because of the situation in Finland. Coming out of the war, Finland—which had been one country with Sweden for six centuries until 1809—was in a precarious position. It had lost its second biggest city, Viborg, and been forced to accept a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. It had

restrictions on its armed forces and a Soviet military base immediately to the west of the capital, Helsinki. The Soviets also dominated the Allied Control Commission charged with overseeing the country in the immediate postwar years.

For Sweden, ensuring that Finland didn't fall under the yoke of the Soviets was a vital interest. Swedish leaders believed that any move toward a broader Western alliance would make Finland's position even more precarious. And although they avoided saying so in public, this consideration was the main reason for Sweden's policy of armed neutrality during the Cold War.

But neutrality did not mean neglect of the armed forces. Throughout the Cold War, Sweden maintained robust military forces, including an air force that for a time was seen as the fourth strongest in the world. Its official policy was one of strict military nonalignment, but it also made concealed preparations to cooperate with the United States and NATO in the event of war, and its stance was generally seen as conducive to Western security interests in the region.

A POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the security situation in northern Europe changed dramatically. Finland, which had gradually consolidated its position as an independent Nordic democracy, could now throw off the last shackles of the postwar period. The three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—had broken loose from the Soviet Union even before its formal demise. And in 1995, Finland and Sweden joined the European Union, a move that both countries had previously deemed impossible because of their policies of neutrality.

For those two countries, joining the EU meant ditching the concept of neutrality. But doing so did not immediately spark discussions about joining

NATO. These were the years of the 1989 Paris Charter, which sought to build a European security order that included Russia, and of the conferences that led to the establishment of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Finland and Sweden both held out hope that they would be able to develop a constructive security relationship with a democratic and reforming Russia. Even after Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gained membership in NATO and the EU more than a decade later, there was little debate in either Sweden or Finland about reconsidering nonaligned military status.

Starting in 2008, however, things in Moscow began to change markedly. Russia's invasion of Georgia that year revealed that its threshold for using military force to pursue its political objectives was substantially lower than many had thought, and a distinctly revisionist tone started to creep into Moscow's policy pronouncements. These trends accelerated dramatically in 2014, when Russia sought to prevent Ukraine from pursuing an association agreement with the European Union and to dismember the country through military aggression.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine this year is drastically changing the geopolitical landscape once again. Putin's immediate aim is to subdue Ukraine, but he is also waging a war against the West. The Russian leader and his acolytes have made it clear that they wish to replace the post-1989 security order in Europe with arrangements that impinge on the sovereignty of other countries. And just as the collapse of the Soviet Union led Sweden and Finland to reconsider their relationships to Europe, the current political earthquake has prompted them to reconsider fundamental elements of their security policies, including their relationships to NATO.

The outcome of the war in Ukraine is still unknown. It is impossible to predict what kind of country Russia will be in the decades ahead, but what is likely to emerge is a country that is both weaker in economic and military terms and more desperate and dangerous in political terms. The Putin regime—whether he or one of his associates is at the helm—is unlikely to give up its imperial ambitions as long as it remains in power.

This reality fundamentally changes the security considerations of both Helsinki and Stockholm. Increased defense spending is clearly one part of the answer to the new security situation. Both Sweden and Denmark have announced that they will increase their defense spending to two percent of GDP, Sweden by 2028. Norway, Finland, and the three Baltic states are more or less there already. Since 2014, Finland and Sweden have also dramatically expanded their military cooperation with NATO, the United States, and the United Kingdom, creating a foundation for further cooperative steps. For more than a decade now, the Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian air forces have been training together on close to a weekly basis.

But just strengthening defense capabilities is no longer seen as enough, which is why NATO accession is rapidly becoming a reality. Both Finland and Sweden have considered alternatives. The two governments sent a letter to all other EU members, reminding them of the solidarity provision in Paragraph 42.7 of the EU treaties, which is similar to the collective defense clause in Article 5 of the NATO Charter. Important initiatives to strengthen EU defense and security policy integration are underway, but as far as territorial defense is concerned, duplicating the institutions and command structures of NATO would make little sense and won't happen. And of course, the EU does not include the two nations of greatest military relevance to northern Europe—the United States isn't a member for obvious reasons, and the United Kingdom isn't one for regrettable reasons.

Both Sweden and Finland are likely to continue to pursue measures that would make the EU into a stronger security alliance, but when it comes to territorial defense, there is simply no alternative to NATO. That has been the clear conclusion of the independent processes Helsinki and Stockholm have undertaken to evaluate alternatives.

Both Finland and Sweden will indicate their interest in joining the alliance well before the late-June NATO summit in Madrid. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said that he foresees a fairly rapid accession process in light of the high degree of military integration that Finland and Sweden have already achieved, but ratification by all 30 member states will still take time. Both countries hope that ratification, particularly in the U.S. Senate, can be fairly rapid and that existing NATO members will be ready to jointly deter any possible Russian provocations between the start of the accession process and its likely completion in 2023.

A CHANGED LANDSCAPE

When Finland and Sweden join NATO, the security architecture of northern Europe will change. Each country brings considerable military capabilities to the alliance: Finland maintains an army with very substantial reserves, and Sweden has strong air and naval forces, particularly submarine forces. With Sweden's advanced Gripen fighters added to the F35s now ordered or under delivery to Norway, Denmark, and Finland, more than 250 highly modern fighters will be available in the region as a whole. Operated together, they will be a substantial force.

Integrated control of the entire area will make defense of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania easier, since Swedish territory and airspace in particular are important for such efforts. This will strengthen deterrence and make a conflict there less likely, according to studies published by both Sweden and

Finland. But perhaps the most important consequence of Finnish and Swedish accession to NATO would be to increase the alliance's political strength as the pillar of the defense of Europe and the transatlantic area. Both countries will help facilitate deeper coordination between the EU and NATO, thus contributing to better burden sharing across the Atlantic—a goal of increasing importance in light of the greater demands placed on the United States by the security situation in East Asia.

Even as they join NATO, Finland and Sweden are likely to take care not to unduly provoke Russia by threatening its long-term security concerns. Norway, which has successfully combined strong military integration in NATO with a policy of reassurance toward Russia, could well serve as a model. The Russian forces and facilities in the Kola Peninsula—in the immediate vicinity of both Norwegian and Finnish territory—are of fundamental importance to Russia's second-strike strategic nuclear capabilities, and Finland is, of course, close to the major population center and industrial hub of St. Petersburg. Partly for these reasons, neither Finland nor Sweden is likely to seek any permanent basing of major NATO units in their territory, and both are likely to have the same reservations about housing nuclear weapons as Denmark and Norway expressed when they joined the alliance.

As the NATO summit in Madrid approaches, the alliance will have to consider Finland's and Sweden's requests for rapid accession. This should be seen not only as a way to strengthen the stability of the Nordic and Baltic areas but also as an opportunity to strengthen the alliance as a whole at a time when Russia's military aggression has made that imperative.

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Time for a strategic pause on NATO expansion

[CONGRESS BLOG](#)

BY DIANA OHLBAUM, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

05/21/22

It's easy to understand why some would think bringing Sweden and Finland into NATO is a good idea. It would serve [Putin](#) right to have his illegal, immoral, and unjustified invasion of Ukraine end up more than doubling Russia's border with NATO. It would reflect what appears to be the [majority sentiment](#) in Finland and a [growing majority](#) of Swedes. Both countries have "[first-rate](#)" military capabilities as well as strong democratic traditions, which would bolster NATO's power and reputation.

But the desire to humiliate Putin and reinforce U.S. global military dominance is shortsighted and dangerous. It risks escalating, expanding, and prolonging the war in Ukraine. It will vastly increase the probability of a nuclear exchange, which could easily spiral into a global holocaust. The U.S. Senate — which by a two-thirds majority must give its [advice and consent to the ratification of protocols](#) adding new members to the alliance — should think hard before rubber-stamping the admission of new candidates.

Escalating, expanding, prolonging the war in Ukraine

The highest priority of the United States should be to bring this war to a swift conclusion through an immediate ceasefire and a negotiated settlement that is fair and durable.

Yet the Biden administration — under [pressure from Congress](#) and the [foreign policy establishment](#) — has only ratcheted up its war aims, from containing Russia to crushing it. Following a high-level visit to Ukraine, [Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin](#) described the U.S. goal as seeing "Russia weakened to the degree it cannot do the kinds of things it has done in invading Ukraine," while [Democratic leaders](#) called for an outright military "victory".

The deepening U.S. involvement is not mere rhetoric; the United States has now admitted to providing operational intelligence that Ukrainian forces [used to target and kill](#) Russian generals as well as to sink Russia's [prized warship](#). Deliveries of increasingly [heavy and sophisticated arms](#) from the United States and its allies have gone beyond allowing Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) to defend his country; they have emboldened him to vastly expand his demands for entering peace talks. Whereas he had earlier indicated [significant flexibility](#) on the Donbas, Zelensky is now [demanding](#) "a restoration of preinvasion borders, the return of more than 5 million refugees, membership in the European Union, and accountability from Russian military leaders."

In this environment, pressing NATO up against Russia's doorstep is a provocation that will only raise the stakes in the Ukraine war and make it more difficult for Putin to back down. It was a mistake to incorporate the former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO after the end of the Cold War, as [many leading analysts and policymakers argued at the time](#), and it ultimately served to reinforce Russia's sense of isolation and encirclement.

Indeed, Ukraine's desire to join NATO and its receipt of arms and training from the United States were certainly [key factors](#) in Putin's decision to invade. Expanding NATO now will raise the stakes for Putin in a way that virtually guarantees the war will drag on longer and increases the chances it will expand beyond Ukraine's borders.

Setting back prospects for peace in Europe

Saying "yes" to Finland and Sweden will make it far more difficult to say "no" to Ukraine. More importantly, Finnish and Swedish accession to NATO could end up destabilizing Europe rather than protecting it. Neither country faced a serious threat from Russia before this crisis, but the arms bonanza that will inevitably result from their incorporation into NATO could create incentives for Russia to push back. The war has already provided a huge [boon for defense contractors](#), as pressure ramps up to modernize and improve the interoperability of systems and [flush out the last remaining Russian military equipment](#).

What Europe needs is not a redrawing of Cold War boundaries and the creation of a [larger NATO footprint](#), but [a new architecture of security and economic institutions](#) that all European countries, including Russia, can eventually join.

Raising nuclear risks

The world has been rightly aghast at [Russian threats](#) to use nuclear weapons if its existence is jeopardized, although the United States has also [refused to rule out](#) the first use of nuclear weapons. Given the danger that even a single tactical nuclear weapon could cause calamitous damage and quickly escalate into a full-scale nuclear exchange, keeping the war in Ukraine from turning nuclear ought to be a central objective of U.S. and NATO military planners. Which begs the question: how does expanding NATO advance that objective?

Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines [testified](#) that Putin might turn to nuclear weapons if he believed he was losing the war in Ukraine, especially if NATO were to intervene. Confoundingly, a ["resounding military defeat"](#) is exactly what some U.S. senators are goading the Pentagon to seek. Moreover, NATO's expanding involvement in the war — and potentially, NATO's expanding size — raise the ante for Putin, [vastly increasing](#) the chances of a nuclear conflagration. Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, [experts deemed](#) the world to be "the closest it has ever been to civilization-ending apocalypse."

President Biden himself seems to understand the need to avoid pushing Putin into a corner. "The problem I worry about now," [he told a gathering of Democrats](#), "is that he doesn't have a way out right now, and I'm trying to figure out what we do about that." Yet imposing [debilitating economic sanctions](#), calling Putin a ["war criminal,"](#) and [prematurely announcing](#) U.S. support for NATO membership for Sweden and Finland only narrow Putin's options and make Russia [increasingly likely](#) to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

Nuclear risks are not limited to deliberate use. As Thomas L. Friedman [explains](#), "the longer this war goes on, the more opportunity for catastrophic miscalculations — and the raw material for that is piling up fast and furious." The basing of more NATO troops and nuclear weapons closer to Russian soil could certainly make Putin's fingers twitchier.

The alternative

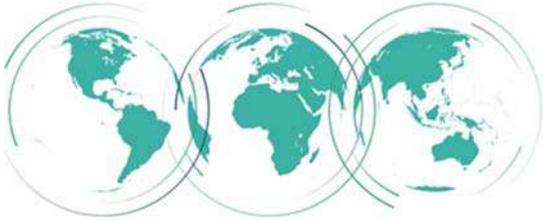
In addition to taking NATO membership off the table for Ukraine, the West could put NATO membership for Sweden and Finland on the negotiating table with Russia. A promise not to expand NATO at all would be fairer to Ukraine and could sweeten the pot for Russia to dial back its territorial ambitions. Such a proposal would need to be part of a broader international effort to stop the fighting, address Russia's legitimate security concerns, and prevent more people from dying inside Ukraine and around the world. After all, the war's impacts are beginning to be felt in the form of [worldwide food shortages](#) that could end up killing far more people than the fighting does.

More broadly, Europeans and Americans should begin thinking about what kind of cooperative security arrangements would be most likely to deter violent conflict, build [positive peace](#), and promote human development inside and beyond their borders. What they ultimately come up with may bear little resemblance to the NATO we have now — and hopefully will not require the [increased spending for weapons and war](#) that is now projected. At the very least, U.S. and NATO leaders must avoid falling prey to the same hubris to which Putin succumbed in his disastrous invasion of Ukraine.

[Diana Ohlbaum](#) served as a congressional foreign policy advisor for more than 20 years, including as a senior professional staff member of the House and Senate Foreign Affairs/Foreign Relations Committees. She currently leads the foreign policy team at FCNL, the Quaker peace and justice lobby, and chairs the board of the Center for International Policy, a progressive foreign policy think tank.

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Session Two

The Future of Global Health

Security: Preparing for Emerging

Pandemic Threats

VIEWPOINT

Strengthening Global Health Security and Reforming the International Health Regulations

Making the World Safer From Future Pandemics

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Viewpoint page 1257

Since the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak emerged in late 2019, more than 623 000 people in the US and 4.4 million people worldwide are known to have died from COVID-19.^{1,2} The true death count is probably many times higher. More than 200 million more people around the world have been infected. The rapid spread of highly contagious variants is a grim signal that those numbers will continue to rise.

Behind the daily reports are the momentous health, economic, and security challenges this crisis poses for the US and the rest of the world. The pandemic has revealed significant weaknesses in global health security. While working to end the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible, leaders around the world must also marshal the resources and commitment to look beyond this pandemic and build much stronger global health security for the future. There are 4 critical components of an effective global health security system in a post-COVID world, which US government and global leaders must come together to pursue.

First, global leaders must modernize essential global institutions, starting with the World Health Organization (WHO). Many of the institutions that are critical to global health security—including the WHO, other technical

ing response capabilities, from state-of-the-art laboratory equipment to medical countermeasures like newly developed vaccines. Many existing agreements, including those governing public health, intellectual property, information sharing, and deliberate biological events, do not reflect these new realities. By reexamining and modernizing these agreements and norms, they could work better for the 21st-century world.

Third, the international community must mobilize sustained financing. Without sufficient funding, it is far more difficult to detect and respond to biological threats, help countries build their own national capacities to respond to crises, fund research and development into new treatments, and carry out rapid response. A critical first step is the creation of a financial intermediary fund,³ capitalized with a mix of private and public funding; the US plans to work with countries and financial institutions to create such a fund. In the wake of past global health threats, including SARS and Ebola, national governments, international organizations, and civil society all failed to make the investments necessary to prevent future crises. The international community must seize the momentum around the current pandemic to make sure the entire world is prepared for the next one.

Fourth, global leaders must strengthen global governance, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability. Facts, data, and science are the most effective tools available. When governments and organizations share data openly, coordinate policies forthrightly, and take responsibility for missteps so they and everyone can do better, the inevitable result is lives saved.

Across all this work, health equity must be addressed and advanced. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequities and inequalities around the world. The goal must be to design a global health security regime that will reduce morbidity and mortality and improve well-being across all populations in all countries. It is the right thing to do, and it is in the enlightened self-interest of each nation because viruses like SARS-CoV-2 do not stop at borders. Without an equitable and fully inclusive approach, every country and every person is vulnerable. Whether building regional vaccine manufacturing capacity, facilitating voluntary technology transfers, or sharing samples at the onset of an outbreak, approaches must be designed that can be adapted for countries at every income level, not just the wealthiest.

Some major strides to advance global health security may take years to accomplish, for example, the

While working to end the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible, leaders around the world must also marshal the resources and commitment to look beyond this pandemic and build much stronger global health security for the future.

agencies of the United Nations, and the regional and global multilateral development banks that facilitate funding for preparedness and response—were created decades ago. A reassessment is needed to ensure that they have the resources, organizational capabilities, and flexibility necessary to respond swiftly to today's threats.

Second, countries and institutions must strengthen international laws and norms, and agreements written at an earlier time may need to be revised. For example, as the climate crisis gives rise to emerging infectious diseases, mechanisms for efficient and effective sharing of data on genetic sequencing must be examined. In a globalized world, regional public health organizations such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention should be more involved in decision-making; so should organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization. New technologies are rapidly chang-

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creation of a new international instrument on preparedness and response, which the WHO and a number of other countries have endorsed. But it is not necessary to choose between a new instrument and a revised standing legal framework; immediate steps can make a meaningful difference. One is strengthening the WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR), adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1969 and revised in 2005.⁴ This is the legal framework under which 196 States Parties are responsible for developing their capacities to prevent, detect, report, and respond to public health emergencies within their borders, to prevent them from spreading to other countries. The IHR key provisions include how to report public health events quickly, handle international travel and transport safely, and protect people's personal health information.⁵ It is a vital legal agreement, but the COVID-19 pandemic revealed weaknesses in it that can be fixed, particularly around early warning systems, coordinating the response, and information sharing.

Through targeted amendments following established practice at the WHO, the IHR can be revised to improve risk assessments, advance equity, help create an environment in which the WHO can fulfill its mission, encourage better information sharing, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of different organizations and governments in an emergency.

Specifically, the amendments to the IHR could include the following:

- Establish early warning triggers for action, for example, through a system of intermediate, graded, or regional health alerts prior to determination of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) or pandemic.

- Enable more rapid sharing of information by countries and the WHO when an event that may constitute a PHEIC is identified. This would make it easier to identify emerging infectious diseases, track genomic sequence data, and establish disease surveillance quickly.
- Strengthen implementation of the IHR, for example, through a new compliance committee or regular conferences that bring all parties together to address pressing issues.
- Bolster rapid assessments and responses from the WHO to provide assistance and expertise in response to a possible PHEIC.
- Enhance the effectiveness of guidance provided by the WHO Emergency Committee convened to assess potential PHEICs by making its deliberations more transparent and by expanding the professional and geographic diversity of its membership.
- The IHR was last revised in 2005, yet the world has changed a great deal in the past 16 years. Amending the IHR again will make it more effective, build on the work advanced by public health experts through the years, and sharpen the work for the future.

Since the influenza pandemic more than a century ago, the world has made major leaps forward in science and medicine, as well as diplomacy, global governance, and the creation of a system of international law and organizations to foster cooperation across borders. Now is the time to take another leap forward to establish a more effective, innovative, responsive, and equitable system for global health security. That is how the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic could result in a healthier, safer, and more secure world for all.

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A new understanding of global health security: three interlocking functions

As the world continues to fail the COVID-19 pandemic stress test, an increasing number of important efforts are underway to strengthen global health security (GHS). For example, the **Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator** and the **COVAX Facility** have been launched by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and its partners in April 2020. In 2021 alone, a Global Health Threats Council was proposed by the **Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR)** in June, the G20 High-Level Independent Panel (HLIP) called for a public funding increase of USD 75 billion over the next five years to prepare for and respond to pandemics, and the World Health Assembly in a special session in November has agreed to proceed with the drafting of a new “pandemic treaty”.

It is hoped that these new international institutions and platforms will support better pandemic governance and financing at the global level. Although a global focus is crucial for the support of common goods, equity, standards and capacity-building, there is an equal need to focus on national efforts. Global leaders must resist two great temptations: the desire to build new institutions (instead of strengthening existing ones like the WHO), and the tendency to securitize health instead of implementing strong public health measures, surge capacity to accommodate heightened pandemic requirements while ensuring access to routine health care, and enabling healthy populations.

We believe that the understanding of global health security should be broad, to avoid unintended consequences of over-globalizing, over-engineering and over-securitizing health. An over-



globalized response could draw political attention and funding away from strengthening national-level core capacities required for prevention detection and response, which remains crucial in a world of nation-states. Over-engineering new institutions would cost time, political energy and money, while potentially encouraging countries to abandon fundamental existing institutions like the WHO and the **International Health Regulations (IHR)**. Finally, over-securitizing health will mean less focus on the social determinants of health and resilient healthcare systems.



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▼ We propose a new understanding of GHS based on three interlocking functions at the national level ▼

We propose a new understanding of GHS based on three interlocking functions at the national level. This synergistic approach to universal health coverage, health security, and health promotion was also recently discussed by a Lancet Commission, to be part of an upcoming publication:

1. Resilient healthcare systems with built-in surge capacity (including for primary healthcare);
2. Resilient public health core capacities that meet IHR standards;
3. Proactive investments toward supportive environments, wellbeing and healthy populations.

In this article, we explore the structural benefits of the three interlocking functions, propose ways to build them into our existing health architecture, and focus on the two essential requirements of global accountability and sustainable support for low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs).



Three structural benefits from the three interlocking functions

We discern three structural benefits from implementing the three interlocking functions at the national level. Firstly, these three interlocking functions each have strong conceptual frameworks and large bodies of evidence to support their positive impact on GHS. Health agencies at the national, regional and international levels are also familiar with them after decades of real-world implementation, and are able to achieve positive effects on health security and health outcomes through country- and community-level actions. There are also strong international commitments to the three interlocking functions, like the **United Nations High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage** and the **WHO's Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All**.

Secondly, these three interlocking functions mirror the WHO's triple billion strategy in the **WHO 2019-2023 Global Programme of Work** and **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 of Good Health and Well-being**. A close alignment with well-established and highly-visible frameworks will ensure that political attention and funding remain focused on the three functions.

Finally, the three interlocking functions provide a pragmatic “middle path” for countries. Currently, countries appear to perceive that public health, UHC and enabling healthy populations are mutually exclusive strategies requiring a binary choice. Limited resources and/or bilateral donor funding also push governments towards “false choices”. Such a dichotomy is further enhanced by the global nature of GHS (with accountability towards the international community and IHR) and the domestic nature of UHC and health promotion (with accountability towards local voters, taxpayers and citizens).

To find a practical balance between their domestic and international priorities, countries can adopt the strategy of the three interlocking functions. This can be assisted by political and health leaders with the courage, vision and ambition to rethink some of the many vertical (albeit well-meaning) global implementation and funding streams to ensure that they serve to strengthen these three functions and not bypass or weaken them.

If implemented correctly, these three interlocking functions would be very useful even individually. It is also likely that they would be mutually synergistic, with progress in one function accelerating or enhancing progress in another function. Taken together, they represent a better balance towards GHS and reduce the risk of over-globalizing, over-engineering or over-securing health.

▼ **Currently, countries appear to perceive that public health, UHC and enabling healthy populations are mutually exclusive strategies requiring a binary choice** ▼

Three realistic implementation strategies

We propose three specific implementation strategies for the three interlocking functions. Firstly, we must implement the minimum standards already set for each of the functions and bring them together to constitute a collective whole. Standards have been set by frameworks such as:

1. Public health and health security frameworks, like the IHR core capacities, the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, and the Global Health Security Agenda;
2. Health coverage frameworks, like the WHO's UHC Service Coverage Index and World Health Statistics, or the ACT-Accelerator's Facilitation Council; and
3. "Supra-health" frameworks, like the progress reports towards the 13 targets and 28 indicators for SDG3, as measured by the United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs (UN DESA).

These frameworks should be considered intermediate steps towards a more robust "steady state of minimum health standards". COVID-19 provides a unique technical and political opportunity to strengthen these frameworks by seeing them as "a whole" together and working towards modifying indicators and standardizing their statistical methodologies, increasing transparency through mandatory reporting, and integrating frameworks to create synergies and reduce duplication.

Secondly, we call for a much broader coalition of health and non-health stakeholders to truly embed the three interlocking functions and to increase their overall resilience. COVID-19 has shown that healthcare services alone cannot protect population health, no matter how resilient healthcare systems, primary healthcare, or public health systems are. Healthcare services can better protect populations if the populations are healthier in the first instance. Therefore, Health in All Policies must now be extrapolated to GHS and vice versa. In practical terms, this means that GHS leaders must actively look beyond their own field, and build strategic and operational bridges to counterparts in international development (trade, finance and economics or ratings agencies), law (human rights or international law) and other sectors, especially the environment.

This will require a new approach of measuring human development that elevates health. One example is to increase the sophistication of health indicators in the UN Development Programme's **Human Development Index** (which currently uses the blunt instrument of "life expectancy at birth" as the sole health metric). The OECD is also measuring country progress based on a **Better Life Index** that accounts for well-being and quality of life.

Another example is to make health inputs, outputs or outcomes a pre-condition for aid or loans (by Bretton Woods lenders or multilaterals), or even use them as an additional metric for ratings agencies (like Moody's or Fitch Ratings) or the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG criteria) for institutional investors (like Blackrock with its US\$9 trillion of assets under management). When combined, these "financial pressure points" would further incentivize, institutionalize and integrate the three interlocking functions, and increase their overall resilience.

Thirdly, we call for a high-level political commitment at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for a holistic approach to GHS via the three interlocking functions. This political commitment can take many forms. It can be as straightforward as a UNGA resolution instructing the WHO Director-General to incorporate the three interlocking functions into existing standards. Or it can be as complex as a multi-year process towards a pandemic treaty (under UN auspices, like the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) or a Framework Convention (following Article 19 of the WHO Constitution, like the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). The chosen instrument depends on political will and feasibility, but must be ambitious, enforceable, hyper-realistic, and include the five veto-wielding countries in the Security Council.

Solving the two essentials: accountability & funding

All efforts to strengthen GHS must address the two essentials: countries must be held accountable for minimum health standards, and LMICs must receive sustainable funding and support.

1. We must hold countries accountable

Firstly, all parties agree that countries must be held accountable to their minimum obligations for health, especially to the IHR core capacities. We propose strengthening the IHR's Joint External Evaluation (JEE) process in three ways: by integrating best practices from other relevant enforcement frameworks; to merge JEE with other enforcement frameworks where possible or necessary; and to introduce transparency.

The JEE can draw lessons from, and be consolidated with, other global enforcement frameworks, such as country obligations for human rights, labour rights, international trade or finance, or climate change. Generally, global enforcement frameworks take place in three ways:

1. Periodic self-review, like the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review process or the Tripartite Antimicrobial Resistance country self-assessment survey (TrACSS);
2. Periodic peer reviews, like the World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review Mechanism or the Financial Action Task Force Mutual Evaluations;
3. Periodic external reviews, like the Paris Agreement for Nationally-Determined Contributions to reducing carbon or the International Labour Organization's Committee of Experts.

There is unlikely to be a "single best accountability mechanism" to hold countries responsible for their three interlocking health functions. The most important factor is government engagement, but this is not measured by various international comparisons that create country indices and rankings of pandemic preparedness.

Therefore, we call for a mixed approach to national accountability that integrates periodic self, peer and external reviews. We also call for a "strategic enforcement convergence" between the different accountability approaches and frameworks from other sectors. As they govern inter-linked challenges like global health security and human rights, their integration will strengthen accountability through synergy, best practices, reduction in gaps, as a redundancy if the primary mechanism fails, and as a "layered risk reduction" approach.

Transparency is crucial in any accountability mechanism, and must be embedded at all layers and in all processes. We also call for new discussions for new legal provisions for on-site inspections for the three interlocking functions, without country consent. Any new legal provisions can be based on the precedent for unconsented weapons inspections by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons or unconsented human rights inspections by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture. While we believe that such an ability is necessary, we also believe that its use should be limited to extreme worst-case scenarios and following a rigid protocol.

▼...countries must be held accountable for minimum health standards, and LMICs must receive sustainable funding and support▼

2. We must provide sustainable funding support to LMICs

The second essential is sustainable financing and support for LMICs to develop their own capabilities in the three interlocking functions. In this respect, we support the principles of the G20 High-Level Independent Panel on **Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response**, but we propose to add several more principles:

1. Donor funds and technical assistance will always play a role, but structures (aid, financial, political and geopolitical) must incentivize a clearly understood national responsibility;
2. Global health structures must be reformed to be more inclusive and “decolonized” (in the sense of avoiding top-down approaches to development based on donor priorities), which will increase equity and the motivation for LMICs to actively participate; and
3. All stakeholders must build and advance the case that the three interlocking functions are in the best interests of all countries (not just LMICs), and that they are also in the self-interest of political leaders seeking public office or re-elections.

Following these principles, we call for greater financial investment by the global community to create stronger health systems, public health core capacities and healthier populations in both high income countries (HICs) and LMICs but this must be supported by country based political will and investments. International development banks, multilateral agencies and other financial institutions should make health a higher priority in their aid, loans or investment criteria for LMICs.

▼ Countries must view health as an investment, not as a fixed cost, and make the necessary political choices for better health ▼

We also call for the decentralizing of capacity to implement away from the global-level headquarters of all international health agencies, in order to strengthen capacity at regional or national offices. This includes creating positions for senior staff in regional or national offices, increasing decision-making privileges for regional or national offices, and conducting demand-led research “closer to the ground” where it has a higher chance of being utilized. Regional and country offices should then have a clear mandate to support national institutions, and resist the temptation to attempt to do too much themselves. With appropriate administrative, political and capacity decentralization, the entire global health “food chain” would be strengthened.

Finally, we also call for all countries (whether LMICs or HICs) to provide adequate political, financial and human capital to support the three interlocking functions at the national level. In practical terms, this means mobilizing additional sources of healthcare funds, the necessary social contract discussions with citizens and taxpayers needed to raise these additional funds, and the efficient and accountable use of these funds. Countries must view health as an investment, not as a fixed cost, and make the necessary political choices for better health. For LMICs, this also requires a long-term strategy to be more self-reliant for their health systems and three interlocking functions.

Health must be integrated

An overly narrow focus on global health security following the COVID-19 pandemic runs the risk of an over-globalized, over-engineered or over-securitized approach to ensure human health. This runs counter to the approach adopted in the Sustainable Development Goals. The three interlocking functions of robust health systems with surge capacity, strong public health core capacities, and healthy populations are holistic, pragmatic, and feasible to strengthen global health security. There are practical and politically realistic ways to implement the three functions, while holding countries accountable and supporting LMICs in sustainable and dignified ways.



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Reflection: A new understanding of global health security: three interlocking functions

Author: Mely Caballero-Anthony

COVID-19 has indeed been a crisis like no other, but this is an understatement given the severity of its impact on humanity globally. As most parts of the world continue to grapple with the huge task of ending the pandemic, the message could not be clearer: health security is fundamental to international peace and security. Addressing existential challenges brought on by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases requires effective governance of global health security at multiple levels from the local to the global arena.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic revealed serious gaps in GHS governance. Many of the policy responses by governments were found wanting in many respects. These included, the lack of pandemic preparedness and response, lack of coordination among government agencies, lack of enforcement of public health measures, – not to mention – the growing pandemic fatigue. The pandemic has also exposed an often overlooked and under-appreciated weakness of national public health systems. The lack of attention given to addressing public health challenges at the national level has skewed international efforts toward ensuring global health security. As pointed out by this report, the understanding of, and responses to, GHS has been over-globalised, over-engineered and over-securitised. The report notes the far reaching consequences of such narrow responses on global health: over-globalising draws political attention and funding away from strengthening national-level core capacities, over-engineering new institutions not only cost time, energy and money but could result in countries abandoning existing institutions like the WHO and the IHR, and over-securitising health trumps efforts at addressing the social determinants of health, including building resilient health systems.

The authors have persuasively argued for a ‘correction’ of the current pre-occupation with pandemic preparedness, which while continuing to be important, tends to draw less attention to the basics of global health security. The report therefore proposes a new understanding of GHS based on what Heymann and Kickbusch refer to as ‘three interlocking functions’ at the national level. These are: “(1) resilient healthcare systems with built-in surge capacity including primary health care; (2) resilient public health core capacities that meet IHR standards, and (3) proactive investments toward supportive environments, wellbeing and healthy populations”. The report then goes on to identify three corresponding benefits and implementation strategies for each of the functions that have been laid out.

The report is a timely initiative against the slew of multi-faceted challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has set out a ‘new’ agenda for global health security while reminding us not to take our eyes off the basic foundations of global health. And while it boldly calls for holding countries accountable to meeting their minimum obligations to health, particularly in achieving the IHR core capacities, it also underscores the need for providing funding resources to help and incentivize developing countries to build national capacities and strengthen public health systems. The authors further argue that good health makes good politics, in that it is in everyone’s interest to advance a comprehensive GHS strategy particularly in a post-COVID world.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors. Their statements are not necessarily endorsed by the affiliated organizations or the Global Challenges Foundation.

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The futility of the pandemic treaty: caught between globalism and statism

CLARE WENHAM, MARK ECCLESTON-TURNER AND
MAIKE VOSS*

At a Special Session of the World Health Assembly (WHASS) in 2021, member states agreed by consensus to establish an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB) to draft a convention, agreement or other international instrument for pandemic preparedness and response under the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO).¹ This so-called ‘pandemic treaty’ was proposed by Chile and the EU, and has subsequently gained public endorsement by multiple world leaders and the WHO.² The underlying logic to which these supporters subscribe is that global governance failed during COVID-19, and a treaty is required to add political commitment to the technical knowhow which already exists to mitigate future challenges in preventing, detecting, responding to and recovering from pandemic events. These challenges include limited robust data; difficulties in sharing pathogens and associated data; lack of cooperation and coordination between governments; and states being overly focused on national protectionism, reflected in measures such as export bans, border closures and ongoing inequities in vaccine distribution,³ to the detriment of ‘global’ health. Proponents argue that such a treaty, rooted in ‘norms of solidarity, fairness, transparency, inclusiveness and equity’, can be the cornerstone of future global health security, and that this will overcome many of the shortcomings seen in the response to COVID-19. They grandly declared: ‘Our solidarity in ensuring that the world is better prepared will be our legacy that protects our children and grandchildren and minimizes the impact of future pandemics on our economies and our societies.’⁴

This sounds inspiring, and in the wake of COVID-19, it is indeed of paramount importance to develop appropriate global solutions to mitigate future global health crises, and to ensure that such mechanisms are rooted in global equity. However, there is a clear mismatch between the problems witnessed during the

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¹ World Health Assembly (WHA), ‘The world together: establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating body to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response’, 28 Nov. 2021, SSA2/CONF./1Rev.1.

² Joint statement by heads of states and World Health Organization (WHO), *COVID-19 shows why united action is needed for more robust international health architecture* (Geneva: WHO, 30 March 2021).

³ Sara E. Davies and Clare Wenham, ‘Why the COVID-19 response needs International Relations’, *International Affairs* 96: 5, 2020, pp. 1227–51.

⁴ Joint statement by heads of states and WHO, *COVID-19 shows why united action is needed*.

response to COVID-19 (and global health security more broadly), rooted in state-centric security policy, and the proposed treaty, which purports to take a globalist, quasi-cosmopolitan approach to pandemic preparedness and response.⁵ We do not believe that a pandemic treaty will deliver what is being extolled by its proponents, or that it will solve the multiple problems of global cooperation in global health that supporters believe it will.

To demonstrate this, we consider the academic and policy discussions for this treaty within a globalist vs statist approach. We analyse the proposed content; the type of instrument proposed; the location of its governance; and the purported failures of the International Health Regulations (IHR) which the treaty intends to solve. In so doing, we highlight the misalignment between the treaty proposal and the actual problems of global health governance. Drawing on empirical examples from international law and international relations, we show that multiple structural challenges have yet to be adequately understood and addressed within the plans for such a treaty, and thus barriers will remain in any new governance arrangement.

Globalist vs statist global health governance

Global health governance can be conceptualized in multiple ways; yet at the centre of most understandings is a tension between globalist and statist approaches.⁶ Statist understandings are primarily security-focused, taking as the unit of analysis the state in the Westphalian system. Globalist approaches are focused on the rights of individuals, grounded in norms of cooperation, solidarity and shared liberal democratic values that seek to govern transnational issues in global health for all, noting that nationalistic policy-making is insufficient to address global concerns.⁷ The globalist approach shares many overlapping values with that of a transnational cosmopolitan, medical humanitarianism or moral egalitarian world-view, rooted in the Kantian logic of universal community, whether this is expressly acknowledged or not: that we all exist as individuals within a single global community,⁸ within which all people ought to have the same chance to access public and private goods that promote health, reduce disease risks and protect from health threats, regardless of where they live. More specifically, according to this approach the global community, composed of states, international organizations, philanthro-

⁵ Sara E. Davies, 'What contribution can International Relations make to the evolving global health agenda?', *International Affairs* 86: 5, 2010, pp. 1167–90.

⁶ Davies, 'What contribution can International Relations make to the evolving global health agenda?'.

⁷ Jeremy Youde, *Global health governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012); Gorik Ooms, 'From international health to global health: how to foster a better dialogue between empirical and normative disciplines', *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 14: 1, 2014, DOI: 10.1186/s12914-014-0036-5; Richard Dodgson, Kelley Lee and Nick Drager, *Global health governance: a conceptual review* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

⁸ Raphael Lencucha, 'Cosmopolitanism and foreign policy for health: ethics for and beyond the state', *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 13: 1, 2013, DOI: 10.1186/1472-698X-13-29; Garrett Brown and Samuel Jarvis, 'Motivating cosmopolitanism and the responsibility for the health of others', in Richard Beardsworth, Garrett Brown and Richard Shapcott, eds, *The state and cosmopolitan responsibilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 203; Sophie Harman and Clare Wenham, 'Governing Ebola: between global health and medical humanitarianism', *Globalizations* 15: 3 2018, pp. 362–76; Thomas Pogge, 'Cosmopolitanism and sovereignty', *Ethics* 103: 1, 1992, pp. 48–75.

pies, private-sector concerns and NGOs, should work collaboratively based on shared ideals of health to ensure the provision of health and well-being, considering the global population of individuals, rather than national borders or the protection of their 'own citizens' alone. It is this dichotomy between the unit of analysis of the individual present in globalist approaches to health, compared to the state-centric model of global health security, that fundamentally challenges global cooperation within a pandemic treaty.

Globalist conceptions have been the basis of much international cooperation in health matters, particularly in programmes based on overseas development aid, or in support provided by high-income countries to low- and middle-income countries in tackling health concerns which are found only in the global South. Here, such a framing of rights, equity, solidarity and shared goals is omnipresent, as donors and recipients alike seek to improve the health of individuals. Moreover, while a rationalist would contend that states comply with international law only on the basis of coincidence, cooperation, coercion and consent,⁹ and that states' self-interest and power capabilities can lead them to depart from international law,¹⁰ the concept of international law, and a rules-based approach to global governance, tend to align with globalist perspectives, owing to the 'pull mechanism', grounded in the 'internalized habit' of international law that prompts governments to comply with obligations rooted in that law.¹¹

However, this world-view is very different from that underlying the statist approach to global health security. For many (high-income) states, preventing, detecting and responding to disease outbreaks is rooted in state-centric visions of national security. By engaging with global pandemic preparedness and response efforts, states protect their populations and economies from infectious disease threats.¹² Indeed, during COVID-19 we have seen the true extent of this: from the very early stages of the pandemic we saw a retrenchment from a shared global vision of support for those most in need to an ineffective 'nation-state first' approach.¹³ Governments across the world have each charted their own course in the pandemic, implementing border restrictions,¹⁴ departing from WHO guidance and obligations under IHR (2005), and in the process rejecting the globalist rhetoric of 'all in this together' and focusing instead on their own populations and their immediate short-term needs, as well as what they need to do to gain political support and win elections, rather than the global good of the

⁹ See e.g. David Armstrong, Theo Farrell and H el ene Lambert, *International law and international relations*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Anne van Aaken, 'Rationalist and behavioural approaches to international law', in Jeffrey L. Dunoff and Mark A. Pollack, eds, *International legal theory: foundations and frontiers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

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¹³ Clare Wenham, 'What is the future of UK leadership in global health security post COVID-19?', *IPPR Progressive Review* 27: 2, 2020, pp. 196–203.

¹⁴ Elzbieta Opilowska, 'The COVID-19 crisis: the end of a borderless Europe?', *European Societies* 23: sup1, 2021, pp. S589–S600.

single global community. The starkest example of this is the ongoing vaccine nationalism that many western states continue to exhibit. There are clear cosmopolitan arguments that the fairest distribution of vaccines would be to give them first to health care workers and those most clinically vulnerable globally; indeed, the COVAX initiative was created to achieve this, grounded in globalist ideals. Yet western statist approaches to global policy-making have undermined COVAX by dominating the limited supply of vaccines through advance purchase agreements to meet domestic needs, including the provision of boosters, directly inhibiting access to vaccines in low- and middle-income countries.¹⁵ The outcome is that case fatality rates will continue to vary wildly between high- and low-income settings, and the increased risk of new variants will prolong the pandemic.

The beginning of global health governance

The roots of international cooperation in responding to infectious disease were put down at the International Sanitary Conferences (ISC) beginning in 1851, through which European states and city-states sought to establish mechanisms to reduce the spread of disease with minimal disruption to trade, something the modern-day IHR still seek to do. In 1951, the World Health Assembly, in adopting the International Sanitary Regulations, sought to place the WHO at the centre of this international disease governance by harmonizing the old ISC instruments, as well as regional arrangements, under one global instrument, ultimately culminating in the IHR, the current governance instrument for pandemic preparedness and response.¹⁶

In adopting the IHR, member states and the WHO recognized the need to balance political drivers with those of public health and trade, or, in other words, the need to promote globalist approaches and cosmopolitan ideals to the status of international law in dealing with infectious disease outbreaks, and to overcome the statist security constraints inherent in the confines of the Westphalian system more broadly—constraints that continue to plague the world in the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷ The formulation of the IHR has been a dynamic process whereby the WHO has sought to develop the regulations in the light of real-world occurrences where their limitations have been felt and to reform them accordingly; the statist vs globalist tension is not new, and if it is not meaningfully addressed it will hamper negotiations towards any pandemic treaty. Indeed, despite inter-

¹⁵ Mark Eccleston-Turner and Harry Upton, 'International collaboration to ensure equitable access to vaccines for COVID-19: the ACT-accelerator and the COVAX facility', *Milbank Quarterly* 99: 2, 2021, pp. 426–49.

¹⁶ Mark Eccleston-Turner and Clare Wenham, *Declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern: between international law and politics* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2021).

¹⁷ Sara E. Davies, Adam Kamradt-Scott and Simon Rushton, *Disease diplomacy: international norms and global health security* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015); David P. Fidler and Lawrence O. Gostin, 'The new International Health Regulations: an historic development for international law and public health', *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics* 34: 1, 2006, pp. 85–94; Lawrence O. Gostin and Rebecca Katz, 'The International Health Regulations: the governing framework for global health security', *Milbank Quarterly* 94: 2, 2016, pp. 264–313; Rebecca Katz and Julie Fischer, 'The revised International Health Regulations: a framework for global pandemic response', *Global Health Governance* 3: 2, 2010, pp. 1–18; Sara E. Davies, 'The international politics of disease reporting: towards post-Westphalianism?', *International Politics* 49: 5, 2012, pp. 1–18.

national cooperation spanning over 150 years in infectious disease control, the central tensions remain largely unchanged from those at the first ISC. How do we encourage states to cooperate in the management of cross-border infectious disease threats, and not engage in statist, nationalistic responses? Moreover, what incentives can we offer to governments of all political persuasions to commit themselves to globalist norms, rather than prioritizing short-term realist goals of state security during a pandemic?

More generally, international cooperation around infectious disease management has generally taken the form of soft law obligations, particularly at the WHO, such as the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework, or through guidelines and frameworks developed by WHO headquarters and regional and country offices, and resolutions of the WHA.¹⁸ While these are clearly globalist in nature, in that they seek to create a harmonized or equitable response to infectious disease outbreaks, doubts had been raised regarding the extent to which statist responses might undermine such globalist mechanisms during a health emergency.¹⁹ To date, the WHO has made use of its treaty-making powers only once, through the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).²⁰

This division between statist and globalist views of infectious disease control is in many ways unsurprising, and any analysis of global health, indeed of international relations more broadly, shows that the foundations of globalist cooperation are on shaky ground;²¹ nevertheless, this division seems to loom quite starkly as the elephant in the room for the pandemic treaty. What has not been made clear is how the globalist nature and content of the proposed treaty can be accommodated by the statist approach to global health architecture and treaty negotiating.

Pandemic treaty proposals

The EU, an original proponent of the proposal, has suggested that the treaty should focus on early detection and prevention; resilience to and response to pandemics, including universal access to medicines, vaccines and diagnostics (despite the rampant vaccine nationalism which many vocal proponents of the treaty have engaged in throughout COVID-19); a stronger international health framework with the WHO at the centre; a 'one health' approach—which seeks to incorporate environmental and animal health factors into public health; better use of digital technology for data collection and sharing; resilient supply chains and coordination of R&D; pathogen and genomic data-sharing; stronger health

¹⁸ Sharifah Sekalala, *Soft law and global health problems: lessons from responses to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Michelle Rourke, 'Access by design, benefits if convenient: a closer look at the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework's standard material transfer agreements', *Milbank Quarterly* 97: 1, 2019, pp. 91–112; Mark Eccleston-Turner, 'The Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework: a viable procurement option for developing states?', *Medical Law International* 17: 4, 2017, pp. 227–48.

²⁰ Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003), 2302 UNTS 166. A subsequent Protocol to the FCTC has also been opened for signature and ratification: Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (2012), 2225 UNTS 209.

²¹ Julio Frenk, Octavio Gómez-Dantés and Suerie Moon, 'From sovereignty to solidarity: a renewed concept of global health for an era of complex interdependence', *Lancet* 383: 9911, 2014, pp. 94–7.

systems and reporting mechanisms; and restoring trust in the international health system.²² The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR) has further recommended that the treaty should consider mechanisms for financing pandemic preparedness and response, R&D, technology transfer, capacity-building, and reinforcing legal obligations and norms of global health security, proposals which have been supported by a flurry of academic commentary on the matter.²³ The WHO and a small collection of heads of state, keen to claim the governance space for such a policy development amid their COVID-19 legitimacy crisis, have added to these proposals that ‘such a treaty should lead to more mutual accountability and shared responsibility, transparency and cooperation within the international system and with its rules and norms’.²⁴

However, ultimately, regardless of such recommendations from international bodies, the content of any treaty will be determined by states. From member-state position papers, the work of the Member States Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness for and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR), and statements at the WHASS, it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of the substantive content states are *proposing* should be covered by the treaty. It has been proposed that the treaty should cover access to medical equipment and countermeasures, including vaccines, diagnostics and treatments;²⁵ capacity-building and standard-setting of health care systems;²⁶ cooperation in research

²² European Council, *An international treaty on pandemic prevention and preparedness* (Brussels, 2021).

²³ Sara Davis et al., ‘An international pandemic treaty must centre on human rights’, *British Medical Journal*, 10 May 2021, <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/05/10/an-international-pandemic-treaty-must-centre-on-human-rights/> (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 29 Jan. 2022.); Haik Nikogosian and Ilona Kickbusch, ‘How would a pandemic treaty relate with the existing IHR (2005)?’, *British Medical Journal*, 23 May 2021, <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/05/23/how-would-a-pandemic-treaty-relate-with-the-existing-ihr-2005/>; Gian Luca Burci, Suerie Moon, Alfredo Carlos Ricardo Crosato Neumann and Anna Bezruki, *Envisioning an international normative framework for pandemic preparedness and response: issues, instruments and options* (Geneva: Graduate Institute Geneva, 2021); Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Paulo Buss and Alicia Ely Yamin, ‘Pandemic treaty needs to start with rethinking the paradigm of global health security’, *BMJ Global Health* 6: 6, 2021; Jorge Vinuales, Suerie Moon, Ginevra Le Moli and Gian Luca Burci, ‘A global pandemic treaty should aim for deep prevention’, *Lancet* 397: 10287, 2021; Suerie Moon and Ilona Kickbusch, ‘A pandemic treaty for a fragmented global polity’, *Lancet Public Health* 6: 6, 2021, pp. E355–6; Thomas R. Frieden and Marine Buissonnière, ‘Will a global preparedness treaty help or hinder pandemic preparedness?’, *BMJ Global Health* 6: 5, 2021, e006297; Swee Kheng Khor and David L. Heymann, ‘Pandemic preparedness in the 21st century: which way forward?’, *Lancet Public Health* 6: 6, 2021, pp. E357–8; Faouzi Mehdi, Ahmed Mohammed Obaid Al Saidi, Fawsiya Abikar Nur, Yves Souteyrand, Jean Jabbour, Mamunur Malik, Abdinasir Abubakar, Wasiq Khan, Richard Brennan, Rana Hajjeh and Ahmed Al-Mandhari, ‘An international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response is an urgent necessity’, *British Medical Journal*, 23 May 2021, <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/05/23/an-international-treaty-for-pandemic-preparedness-and-response-is-an-urgent-necessity/>.

²⁴ Joint statement by heads of states and WHO, ‘COVID-19 shows why united action is needed’.

²⁵ Government of India, ‘Approach on WHO reforms’, New Delhi, 2021; EU, ‘EUMS’s initial views on a possible structure and content of a pandemic treaty’, Brussels, 31 Aug. 2021. The issue of equitable access was raised by a number of states at the WHASS, including Nepal, Andorra, Syria, Sudan, Costa Rica (on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Pandemic Treaty), Botswana (on behalf of the African Union), Slovenia (on behalf of the EU) and the United States.

²⁶ Government of India, ‘Approach on WHO reforms’; WHO Africa Group member states, ‘Non-paper by the Africa Group member states’, Geneva, 19 Oct. 2021; Government of Japan, ‘Japan’s priorities on the WHO review/reform (version 2.0)’, Tokyo, 25 Dec. 2020. Health system strengthening was also proposed at the WHASS by Brazil, Slovenia, Pakistan, Argentina, Indonesia and many other states.

and technology;²⁷ a ‘one health’ approach;²⁸ data-sharing;²⁹ reform of the WHO alarm mechanism, the public health emergency of international concern declaration process and travel restrictions;³⁰ and cross-cutting issues, such as accountability, investment in health systems, increased power for the WHO and increased global coordination.³¹ Issues beyond the typical boundaries of health, such as trade and supply chains and international travel, have also been raised as potential substantive topics for the treaty to address.³² Finally, many member states framed the development of a treaty in terms of human rights, solidarity and equity, including redressing failures that have occurred during COVID-19.³³ Collectively, these proposals remain aspirational; this proposed content for the treaty text will be subject to further definition, discussion and negotiation.

Beyond these substantive content proposals, states have clarified their expectations that any treaty must work in conjunction with the 2005 IHR,³⁴ have legally binding enforcement mechanisms, a strong secretariat and clear metrics for monitoring and evaluation; involve heads of state and not simply public health professionals;³⁵ form part of broader WHO reform efforts; have both technical guidance and political engagement; be flexible enough to accommodate ministerial clubs within broader global health governance; address material conditions to facilitate adherence;³⁶ and not focus solely on the global level, but require action at national level and state buy-in domestically.³⁷

This range of proposals shows that the precise diagnosis of the weaknesses of the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic and global health governance more broadly is far from complete. While we do not suggest that all these ideas

²⁷ WHO Africa Group member states, ‘Non-paper by the Africa Group member states’; Ghana, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

²⁸ WHO Africa Group member states, ‘Non-paper by the Africa Group member states’; Governments of France and Germany, ‘Non-paper on strengthening WHO’s leading and coordinating role in global health with a specific view on WHO’s work in health emergencies and improving IHR implementation’, Geneva, 2021; EU, ‘EUMS’s initial views on a possible structure and content of a pandemic treaty’.

²⁹ EU, ‘EUMS’s initial views on a possible structure and content of a pandemic treaty’; Governments of Botswana, Nepal, Oman and Switzerland, ‘Non-paper: WHO’s work in health emergencies and IHR revision’, Geneva, 2021; UK, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021; Canada, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

³⁰ Governments of Botswana et al., ‘Non-paper’; Governments of Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay, ‘Strengthening international health protection architecture’, Geneva, 2021; Government of the United States of America, ‘Amendments of the International Health Regulations 2005’, Washington DC, 2021.

³¹ Governments of France and Germany, ‘Non-paper on strengthening WHO’s leading and coordinating role’; Government of the United States, ‘Amendments of the International Health Regulations 2005’; Government of the United States of America, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

³² Governments of Botswana et al., ‘Non-paper’.

³³ Human rights was raised at WHASS by, among others, Portugal and the Netherlands; solidarity by Chile, Fiji, Ecuador, Egypt, Algeria, Norway, Mozambique, El Salvador, Nigeria, Albania and many more; and equity by over 60 member states, including Gabon, Dominican Republic, Namibia, Tanzania, Mauritania, UK, Georgia and Tonga.

³⁴ Raised at WHASS by Russian Federation, Estonia, Philippines, Japan, Iraq, Malaysia and Cambodia.

³⁵ Government of Jamaica, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021; Government of Brazil, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

³⁶ Government of Maldives, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021; Government of Singapore, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

³⁷ Government of Malawi, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021; Government of the Philippines, submission to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

will make it into a treaty, we do see a very real risk of so much being proposed for inclusion within a single accord that it seems unlikely that it will be able to achieve it all. Moreover, if the proposed substantive content does make it to the drafting and negotiation process of the INB, it is unlikely that this process will see consensus among member states reached on these issues, and that in turn will limit ratification of any treaty nationally, particularly if the contentious issues are seen to impinge on trade or sovereignty.³⁸ To put the point simply, the content of the pandemic treaty currently being proposed is at its heart a globalist project, seeking to improve health for all, allow equity in preparedness for and response to future pandemics, and asserting at its core the universality of human populations. Even within states we see tension between health and development ministries, and between cabinets and foreign ministries, on such issues. Championing solidarity and equity requires states to depart from state-centric policy-making and focus on the global, something states have been unable or unwilling to do in global health governance to date, and indeed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Until such tension between statist reality and globalist ideals is addressed, any pandemic treaty will remain impossible to implement. To move forward, rich countries must answer the question of what they are willing to give up nationally in order to be better prepared internationally for future pandemics. Statist policy-making during COVID-19 has shown the answer to be: not much.

Treaty design

Globalist proponents of the treaty have focused on a legally binding mechanism to ensure state accountability to the treaty text. However, at the WHASS, the language of ‘a legally binding instrument to be adopted under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution’ was changed to ‘WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument ... with a view to adoption under Article 19, or under other provisions of the WHO Constitution as may be deemed appropriate by the INB’ (emphasis added), meaning that the resulting ‘pandemic treaty’ may not actually be a treaty at all, but some other instrument, lacking the legally binding force of a treaty. Current proposals are being considered within a framework convention approach, as exemplified in connection with the WHO by the FCTC, and within the wider UN architecture by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). A framework convention approach to treaty-making allows potential state parties to reach consensus on high level legally binding principles and commitments, such as globalist ideals of ‘solidarity’ and ‘equity’, in the initial negotiations; then, at a later date, agreements can be reached which embody these principles in detail. Importantly, this approach allows states to pick and choose to which protocols within the treaty they wish to be party, leading to different states ratifying different elements of the overall treaty package, enabling a broad consensus

³⁸ Remco van de Pas, Priti Patnaik and Nicoletta Denticco, *The politics of a WHO pandemic treaty in a disenchanted world*, G2H2 report (Geneva, Nov. 2021).

approach to norms of international law-making, but with national differentiation in respect of specific obligations.

For example, in the CBD and its associated Nagoya Protocol there are essentially three distinct legal regimes: CBD alone (73 state parties), the CBD plus Nagoya (123 state parties), and neither CBD nor Nagoya (United States and Holy See). For a global treaty aiming to prevent, detect and respond to emerging infectious disease, dependent on global uptake, such fragmentation in ratification of different parts of a pandemic treaty could be disastrous, and indeed could spell the undoing of the treaty itself. Imagine the scenario where an outbreak emerges in a location which has not ratified the treaty protocol requiring prompt sharing of pathogen genetic sequences; there would be no consequences grounded within the pandemic treaty to hold that state to account. Or consider a scenario in which a state has not ratified obligations in respect of the equitable distribution of diagnostics, treatment or vaccines during a health emergency, and instead chooses to stockpile; such action would raise questions regarding the overall utility of the treaty in a health emergency. Thus, while a framework convention may seem appealing from a 'get it done' perspective, building on contemporary political momentum, its inability to create a harmonious international legal regime could leave significant gaps in the global governance of disease. Moreover, protocols take considerable time to construct; the first protocols to the UNFCCC and the CBD were not adopted until, respectively, three and seven years, and did not enter into force until ten and eleven years after agreement on the parent conventions. A framework convention approach *could* be viable, if states could agree on short, definite timelines for negotiating further protocols, although this does not deal with the inevitable divergence among states in respect of the adoption and content of protocols.

Interaction with the IHR

The IHR, while lambasted for not mitigating the spread of COVID-19, neatly demonstrate the tension between the statist and globalist approaches in global health. Indeed, the IHR Review Committee on the Functioning of the Regulations during COVID-19 concluded that the problem lay not with the IHR as formulated *per se*, but that *implementation* of the IHR by states is poor; and it is this lack of implementation and compliance that has underlain the disastrous response to COVID-19. Indeed, the IPPPR and the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee of the Health Emergencies Programme have further highlighted poor compliance with the IHR and with WHO guidance as being central to the failures of the response to COVID-19. Here we see the IHR, an instrument rooted in a globalist, rules-based approach to infectious disease, which seeks to encourage states to prioritize pandemic control over state sovereignty, being undermined by statist prioritization of security within global health.

Yet any agreement must seek to be compatible with article 57 of the IHR, which stipulates that 'the IHR and other relevant international agreements should be interpreted so as to be compatible', and that 'the IHR shall not affect the rights

and obligations of any State Party deriving from other international agreements'. Concerns were raised during the IHR negotiations that the subject-matter of the regulations would overlap with issues covered by other instruments of international law³⁹—and a pandemic treaty, particularly one adopted as a framework convention with multiple protocols, will only add to this fragmentation. Indeed, the issue of fragmentation being exacerbated by the pandemic treaty was raised by Russia, Pakistan, France and numerous other states at WHASS.⁴⁰

Within international law, legal agreements should first be interpreted in line with the principle of 'mutual supportiveness', which presumes against conflicts between legal regimes. Second, potentially conflicting instruments should not be read in a manner that seeks either to add to or to diminish rights and obligations provided for in other treaties. However, the international legal landscape for health emergencies is already deeply fragmented, made up of a multitude of instruments deriving from multiple organs of the international system, including the WTO TRIPS Agreement, resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the CBD, the IHR, resolutions of the WHA, the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, and resolutions of the UN General Assembly. Given how broad is the list of substantive topic areas the treaty is seeking to address, its potential interaction and engagement with each of the above regimes need to be considered and harmonized. This is especially relevant for multisectoral issues such as one health that directly address multiple regimes.⁴¹

Harmonizing different legal regimes is a monumental task, and in reality the pandemic treaty is likely only to make an already fractured international governance system all the more fractured. If states can choose between different instruments such as the IHR, a new treaty, its protocols, or some combination of these, fragmentation will increase, with negative implications for pandemic preparedness and response.

Alternatives to a new treaty

A potential alternative to the treaty would be to update the IHR, making them more relevant, and addressing the governance and compliance gaps, moving them beyond the current 'name and shame'.⁴² Indeed, as the WGPR highlighted, out of the 131 recommendations they made, 101 appear to be met by implementing or building on current frameworks, and only 30 actually require a new instrument.⁴³

³⁹ Barbara von Tigerstrom, 'The revised International Health Regulations and restraint of national health measures', *Health Law Journal* 13: 35, 2005, pp. 35–76.

⁴⁰ Submissions to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

⁴¹ Arne Ruckert, Carlos Gonçalo das Neves, John Amuasi, Suzanne Hindmarch, Christina Brux, Andrea Sylvia Winkler and Hélène Carabin, *One Health as a pillar for a transformative pandemic treaty*, Global Health Centre policy brief (Geneva: Graduate Institute Geneva, 2021), <https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/sites/internet/files/2021-11/policybrief-onehealth-v3.pdf>.

⁴² Sara E. Davies, 'Nowhere to hide: informal disease surveillance networks tracing state behaviour', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 24: 1, 2012, pp. 95–107.

⁴³ WHO, 'Member States Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness for and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR): preliminary findings from COVID-19-related recommendation mapping' (Geneva, 26 Aug. 2021).

The futility of the pandemic treaty

Moreover, deeper analysis has shown that most of these 30 could be met through the IHR functioning as originally intended, for example through improvements to the National Focal Point—the national centre of office which shall be accessible at all times for communications with the WHO regarding events under the IHR, sustainable financing, community participation and human rights; thus ‘the only point amongst the recommendations which requires a framework convention is the recommendation which states that there must be an establishment of a new framework convention’.⁴⁴

However, opening the text of the IHR for renegotiation runs the risk of not simply adding more tenets, but losing some of the current content during negotiations. For many, the balance between statist and globalist visions within the IHR was tenuous at best, and given the approaches taken by national decision-makers during COVID-19, it is not hard to imagine that they might seek to reduce the power of the IHR and/or WHO in favour of further legitimizing state-centrism during a pandemic. A halfway house that would avoid opening up the IHR to (re) negotiation would be to assemble a review conference to tweak the IHR regularly, ironing out issues which emerge. This model is well used for the Biological Weapons Convention, which has biannual meetings to re-establish procedures and norms associated with the treaty.⁴⁵ A mechanism currently planned is a ‘universal periodic health review’, which could include peer reviews, reports by special rapporteurs, experts and civil society groups, and incentives and provision of financial assistance to fill identified gaps. However, this again takes a globalist world-view, and assumes that states would be willing to undergo such a review, and subject themselves to peer scrutiny of their systems and processes, for the greater good of global pandemic preparedness.

A further argument against working through the IHR is that the regulations are seen as a political ‘dead horse’, perceived to have failed during COVID-19 (and arguably before that), and indeed implicated in broader tensions in respect of the legitimacy of the WHO in global disease control. Seeking to reform them may be a dubious exercise if they are seen as not worthy of revival, and thus a new treaty may be more politically palatable. This may be particularly true among those states that failed to comply with IHR during COVID-19, and now want to be seen to be doing something to mitigate future pandemics. However, the mandate and legitimacy of the IHR are built upon a long history of international cooperation to minimize and prevent the international spread of disease,⁴⁶ and the results of this historic work should not be cast aside too easily.

⁴⁴ Nithin Ramakrishnan and K. M. Gopakumar, ‘WHO: working group bureau questions on pandemic treaty prejudice outcome’, *Third World Network Info Service on Health Issues*, Geneva, 1 Sept. 2021, <https://www.twn.my/title2/health.info/2021/hiz10901.htm>.

⁴⁵ Rebecca Katz, ‘Pandemic policy can learn from arms control’, *Nature* 575: 7782, 2019, p. 259.

⁴⁶ David P. Fidler, ‘From International Sanitary Conventions to global health security: the new International Health Regulations’, *Chinese Journal of International Law* 4: 2, 2005, pp. 365–92.

Implementation

Notwithstanding limitations within the substantive content of the IHR and/or the pandemic treaty, the most pressing limitation is compliance, which requires statist governments to abide by globalist norms and law for preventing, detecting, responding to and recovering from future health threats. This issue was raised by several states during the WHASS, including the United States and Malaysia, along with the WHO regional directors for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and Europe.⁴⁷ It has become something of a cliché that ‘almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law and almost all of their obligations almost all of the time’,⁴⁸ but non-compliance with the IHR, rooted in the prioritization of state security—particularly during an emergency—has plagued the WHO for more than 50 years. This raises the question of what, if anything, a pandemic treaty can do differently to address the problem of compliance. There are two key options: incentives and sanctions.

Incentives could be designed to ensure that governments adhere to the pandemic treaty, whatever the content might be. For example, if a barrier to implementing effective surveillance systems is financing, a ‘carrot’ would be to ensure that funds are available to help with system-wide development. Similarly, if prompt reporting and sharing epidemiological data is seen as counterproductive to national (economic) security, financial or human resources could be made available upon the submission of such reports, mitigating the sting of any trade challenges. Little of this support for capacity-building was present in the text of the 2005 IHR, despite pressure for it from low- and middle-income countries.⁴⁹ Any incentive would need to be significant, so long-term sustainable financing mechanisms would need to be employed. These could come from Bretton Woods institutions such as the IMF, in the form of special drawing rights, or from the World Bank in the form of loans; or indeed a new pooled insurance mechanism for pandemics could be established to share the costs of the risks associated with infectious disease outbreaks, while simultaneously using these financing resources to encourage compliance with a pandemic treaty. High-income countries, however, may not be motivated by financial resources in the same way as their lower-income counterparts, warranting consideration of non-financial incentives for compliance.

Sanctions for non-compliance are the alternative, yet these seem politically unsellable in the present climate. Moreover, sanctions may lead to greater concealment of outbreaks by states not wishing to be punished. Given the WHO’s current lack of enforcement power, coupled with a lack of financing, it appears that a pandemic treaty under the aegis of the WHO would merely maintain the status quo in compliance. Member states have disregarded the IHR’s temporary recommendations during emergencies, favouring a statist perspective, and a future pandemic treaty will not change this dynamic. Indeed, states are highly unlikely to agree to a treaty sanctions regime for this very reason. Statist policy-makers

⁴⁷ Submissions to WHASS, Geneva, 29 Nov. 2021.

⁴⁸ Louis Henkin, *How nations behave: law and foreign policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

⁴⁹ Eccleston-Turner and Wenham, *Declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern*.

want freedom to depart from their treaty obligations when it suits them, just as they do under the current IHR framework.

Governance

The question of compliance and accountability raises further questions about the governance of the treaty itself. Early treaty discussions focused on the location of a pandemic treaty, with some suggesting it could be done outside the WHO. For this treaty to have teeth, the organization that governs it needs to have power—either political or legal—to enforce compliance. In its current form, the WHO does not possess such powers. The manner in which states departed from WHO guidance during COVID-19 (and indeed earlier) demonstrates that there is a big problem with the legitimacy of the WHO in the eyes of the global community. Schwalbe and Lehtimäki state that ‘a treaty negotiated under the auspices of the WHO, which has little authority of its own and instead reflects the interests of its member states, will be unlikely to make the sweeping changes that are urgently needed’.⁵⁰ Indeed, the WHO takes a globalist, cosmopolitan world-view, its mandate asserting that the ‘highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being’;⁵¹ and yet for this treaty to work, it needs to be able to hold its members to account for statist behaviour. Notwithstanding the statist vs globalist tension, a pandemic treaty governed by the WHO will inevitably be beset by further challenges, and may be a litmus test for organization as a whole, as Klabbers has noted:

When organizations start to ... impose and monitor sanctions regimes ... discussions will start about how they do so, and whether they do so well enough to merit further support. They operate, so to speak, on the market of legitimacy, and legitimacy, however precisely conceptualized, is a scarce resource.⁵²

The WHO is seen by many as a location of ‘low politics’, the remit of health ministers rather than heads of state. A weak WHO housing the accord risks the overall power of the treaty waning, when negotiated and ratified, if it cannot enforce obligations or hold states to account for non-compliance. Moreover, the weakness of the WHO may in turn limit the treaty’s exercise of its powers to govern trade and intellectual property, and make meaningful steps around compliance and sanctions, all of which appear among the proposals for the treaty contents, and yet fall outside the WHO’s mandate and remit.

If the pandemic treaty takes a multisectoral approach, the WHO would need to govern not only health decision-making in states, but also other regimes (e.g. animal health and environmental policy, trade and intellectual property rights surrounding access to medical counter-measures, and the biodiversity implications

⁵⁰ Nina Schwalbe and Susanna Lehtimäki, ‘The world should treat pandemics like it treats chemical weapons’, *Foreign Policy*, 14 April 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/pandemic-treaty-who-tedros-china-transparency-inspections-data-covid-19-coronavirus/>.

⁵¹ Preamble, constitution of the World Health Organization (1946), 14 UNTS 185.

⁵² Jan Klabbers, ‘The paradox of international institutional law’, *International Organizations Law Review* 5: 151, 2008, p. 169.

of pathogen-sharing). The WHO does not at present have the capacity to do so, and other international organizations will not accept an expansion of its mandate. What is more, the WHO is chronically underfunded: it has tried to increase its financing, yet this is challenged by the division between assessed and voluntary contributions, the former being at the discretion of the WHO to spend, and the latter being ring-fenced for programmes aligning with donor priorities, another example of statist approaches to policy-making within a globalist institution.⁵³ States have perpetuated this lack of financing; and without adequate funding, the WHO remains unable to mount a meaningful response to any pandemic, or to be seen as a credible repository for governance of the pandemic treaty. This point is particularly pertinent when considering the tension between the globalist views of global health governance that are central to WHO activities, and the more securitized, state-based responses evident in states' responses to COVID-19.

Some commentators have argued that the treaty itself might be an instrument for strengthening the WHO's position in global health governance. Duff and colleagues argue that the WHO needs to have the authority to coordinate an international response to a pandemic; be able to enforce treaty requirements; be politically independent and thereby able to make the best public health decisions; have a sustainable source of financing; represent all states; and be multisectoral.⁵⁴ Indeed, many statements at the WHASS focused on how to strengthen the WHO to facilitate the treaty in a meaningful way, as well as on what the treaty might offer the WHO in terms of legitimacy-building. The very point that the organization might need to be strengthened as part of a treaty-making process is a pertinent one. The mere fact that this is being considered speaks volumes about the WHO's inability to manage a treaty of this magnitude and importance. Alternatively, it may be that statist policy-makers want to place the treaty in a weak institution with no meaningful accountability and compliance mechanisms, so as to be free to disregard any obligations during a health emergency. Thus it could be a strategic move by some high-income governments, currently championing the WHO as the home for the treaty, to appear to be promoting globalist ideals of global health governance, while knowing full well that they will never comply with the treaty they are championing, especially around issues of equity and access to medical counter-measures.

We do not wish to dismiss the idea of a more powerful WHO acting on the international stage; however, there is very little evidence to support the idea that this is what *states* want. Indeed, the 2005 revisions to the IHR, developed after the SARS outbreak, contain underdeveloped governance and compliance structures,

⁵³ Kristina Daugirdas and Gian Luca Burci, 'Financing the World Health Organization: what lessons for multilateralism?', *International Organizations Law Review* 16: 2, 2019, pp. 299–338 at p. 300.

⁵⁴ Johnathan H. Duff, Anicca Liu, Jorge Saavedra, Jacob Batycki, Kendra Morancy, Barbara Stocking, Lawrence Gostin, Sandro Galea, Stefano Bertozzi, Jose Zuniga, Carmencita Alberto-Banatin, Akuka Sena Dansua, Carol del Rio, Maksut Kulzhanov, Kelley Lee, Gisela Scaglia, Cyrus Shahpar, Andrew Ullmann, Steven Hoffman, Michael Weinstein and José Szapocznik, 'A global public health convention for the 21st century', *Lancet Public Health* 6: 6, 2021, pp. E428–33; Germán Velásquez and Nirmalya Syam, 'A new WHO international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response: can it address the needs of the global South?', South Centre Policy Brief no. 93, 10 May 2021.

despite their focus on pandemic prevention and the cross-border spread of health emergencies.⁵⁵ Moreover, the balance of power between the WHO and states in terms of reporting and information-sharing during a health emergency remained a key tension in the IHR negotiation, between the best public health approach and the state's sovereign prerogative.⁵⁶ Given the response to COVID-19 and the abandonment of the WHO by many members pursuing their statist responses to the pandemic, it seems unlikely that member states will be willing to give the globalist institution more power in the future—even though this might make the world better prepared for the next pandemic.

Other suggestions have been made: among them, that the treaty either be hosted within another UN institution or that a Global Health Threats Council be created,⁵⁷ modelled on the UNSC, which would enjoy similar powers and have buy-in from the 'highest echelons of power';⁵⁸ this, indeed, would be much more closely linked to norms of national security, rather than cosmopolitanism. While this option may be attractive from an enforcement perspective, ensuring the political salience of the treaty, it is not without its own difficulties. Setting up new institutions is a significant commitment, perhaps bigger than negotiating a new treaty, especially if that new institution is to have powers similar to those of the UNSC; and it will take time, institutional memory and sustainable funding to manage the unruly process of negotiating and implementing a pandemic treaty. At the same time, any new institution will contribute to more fragmentation in the global health architecture and will weaken WHO authority, and there is very little evidence that states are willing to cede sovereignty to a new institution. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that member states are not willing to cede much sovereignty in the health emergency space at all; statist policy-making in health remains the dominant behaviour in a world of globalist rhetoric.

Conclusion

The Group of Friends of the Treaty argues that 'the world cannot afford to wait until the COVID-19 pandemic is over to start planning for better pandemic preparedness and response and implementing the lessons learnt from this crisis', adding that 'key to the success of this endeavour will be a collective approach that puts aside "business-as-usual"'. However, many states championing the treaty are not suffering the downstream effects of vaccine nationalism, inaccessible oxygen, lack of funds to support health system surge capacity, etc. As Ramakrishnan argues, 'This argument is disingenuous. How can we learn from lessons of the current crisis when international agencies and the international community have so far failed on global solidarity and equitable access, and instead persisted with "business as usual" approaches?'⁵⁹ This comment underlines the key tension of the

⁵⁵ Eccleston-Turner and Wenham, *Declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern*.

⁵⁶ Davies et al., *Disease diplomacy*.

⁵⁷ Nikogosian and Kickbusch, 'How would a pandemic treaty'.

⁵⁸ Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, 'Second report on progress', Geneva, Jan. 2021.

⁵⁹ Nithin Ramakrishnan, K. M. Gopakumar and Sangeeta Shashikant, 'WHO: should members pursue a

proposed pandemic treaty. Its approach is rooted in globalist ideals of what the perfect pandemic governance should look like; yet it seems to have little regard for the realities of the statist, securitized landscape that exists for responding to pandemic threats. Current plans do not support the needs of states globally who need to end this pandemic first, and do not have the resources to do so due to statist responses to finite resources by high-income countries. The globalist norms of international solidarity and equitable access that world leaders place at the centre of the pandemic treaty proposals seem quite distant from the realities of the pandemic response in which many states are currently living. It doesn't take a big leap of understanding to see why some governments may see this as a token effort, and do not believe that negotiating a new treaty will lead to meaningful change.

Thus an alternative way to look at this push for the pandemic treaty is as a distraction from the current failure of global governance. While it may appear unsurprising that the response to failed global governance is to create new mechanisms for global governance, it does at least on the surface appear to show states in the global North 'doing something'. However, high-income states cannot simply 'treaty themselves out' of a pandemic.⁶⁰

The fundamentals of the treaty remain a challenge, with talk of solidarity a distant dream for those living the reality of the nation-first approach to COVID-19. Beyond the bigger picture, after the INB launches the zero draft of the pandemic treaty in August 2022, it will probably take years to negotiate, given the scope of the proposed content, and through such laborious negotiation the scope and power of the document will be limited, rendering meaningless any authority to bind states. Globalist, cosmopolitan visions championed by public health communities, at odds with national security strategies, will simply go unratified or unimplemented. Hence, we fear the process will simply cost a lot of time and money, without fundamentally changing the ways in which states respond to emerging infectious diseases or the underlying inequalities which blight the global health system, however well meaning its negotiations and despite its work being rooted in globalist understandings of health. Also, the world in its current state cannot wait until 2024 for a pandemic treaty to be negotiated to bring about fundamental impacts on behaviours in international disease prevention and response.

This lack of viable options speaks to the broader problems within the global governance of disease: that global processes for health cooperation rooted in a globalist vision of the individual and health equity are fundamentally at odds with the Westphalian state-based system in which we live, which prioritizes state security and the health of a selected few at all other costs. Even something as big as a major global pandemic is not sufficient to get governments to think beyond national interests.⁶¹

pandemic treaty in the midst of a global pandemic?', *Third World Network Info Service on Health Issues*, May 21/07, 12 May 2021, <https://www.twn.my/title2/health.info/2021/hiz10507.htm>.

⁶⁰ Unni Karunakara, 'Europe cannot "treaty" itself out of the pandemic', *Health Policy Watch*, 30 Nov. 2021, <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/europe-treaty-pandemic/>.

⁶¹ Davis et al., 'An international pandemic treaty must centre on human rights'; Moon and Kickbusch, 'A pandemic treaty for a fragmented global polity'.



Transforming or Tinkering?

Inaction lays the groundwork
for another pandemic

H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
Rt Hon. Helen Clark

May 2022



Contents

Foreword	4
Glossary of terms	6
The impact: Why this pandemic must be the last	8
Some progress, much process	12
Actions needed now to fix a still broken system	16
1. Equitable access to tools now and always	16
2. Financing that involves and serves every country	19
3. A stronger WHO and a new system for surveillance, detection, and alert	20
4. Sustained political leadership and accountability	21
5. Get Prepared!	22
Constant learning, critical voices	26
Final words	28
Annexes	30
Annex 1: Panel recommendations scoring table	30
Annex 2: Critical themes from community consultations	38
Annex 3: Rapid Review on the transition from pandemicity to endemicity and possible routes to end the COVID-19 pandemic	43
Annex 4: Methodology and summary of expert opinions on two roundtables	45
Acknowledgements	50
References	51



Foreword

One year ago, as co-chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, we called for the swift implementation of a transformative package of reforms to make COVID-19 the last pandemic, and for urgent actions to end the COVID-19 emergency.

One year on, and political focus to prepare for more waves is flagging. Work has begun to prevent the next pandemic, but at the current pace, the transformative change required will take years to complete.

The impacts of this pandemic continue to take a huge toll. Since May 2021, more than 2.8 million people are reported to have died due to COVID-19, and estimates show many millions more excess deaths^[1-4] The social and economic shocks, now compounded by the invasion of Ukraine, have led to a fractured world, and more poverty and hunger.

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, which we had the honour of co-chairing, spent eight months reviewing the global experience of COVID-19 in the first year of the pandemic. We undertook an evidence-based enquiry and were rigorous in our methodology. This work resulted in [a landmark report](#), an accompanying narrative, an authoritative chronology, 15 background papers, and peer-reviewed publications in the Lancet, Nature Medicine, and the British Medical Journal.

The Independent Panel found weak links at every point in the chain of preparedness and response. Preparation was inconsistent and underfunded. The alert system was too slow—and too meek. The World Health Organization was under-powered. The response has exacerbated inequalities. Global political leadership was absent.

To address these fatal flaws, the panel recommended a package of urgent, actionable reforms to end COVID-19 and transform the system for pandemic preparedness and response. In November 2021, we released a [six-month follow-up report](#), and concluded that the world was losing time — change was too slow, and too little.

Now, this one-year review of progress against the Panel's recommendations continues to reveal insufficient, inequitable, and now flagging attention to addressing COVID-19. The work underway to transform the international system lacks coherence, urgency, and focus. Reform proposals are being deliberated in different fora, but are not sufficiently connected, and remain still largely stuck in processes that will take years to deliver.

COVID-19 remains a divisive pandemic of inequality and inequity. Weak health systems and market-drivers that limit access to vaccines, tests, and therapies have constrained responses. A lack of investment to foster healthy populations, ensure adequate social protection, correct the digital divide, build resilient supply chains, and end gender inequality, denial of human rights, and fractures in trust set the wider context, and explain why preparedness for and responses to pandemics are matters requiring attention far beyond the health sector.

We believe that solutions lie in multisectoral, whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approaches at the national level. Globally, we need architecture fit for the task, including a leader-led, inclusive, and independent global council to maintain political attention to pandemic preparedness and response long after the COVID emergency has passed.

New pandemic threats will emerge. The risks of not being better prepared for them are great, and inaction is hard to fathom. SARS-CoV-2 continues to mutate, causing record high numbers of infections in 2022 and raising questions about the future of the trajectory of this pandemic.

Now is the time to transform the international system for preparedness and response – and not merely tinker with it. At the present pace of change, the world is laying the groundwork for failure and the risk of a new pandemic with the same devastating consequences.

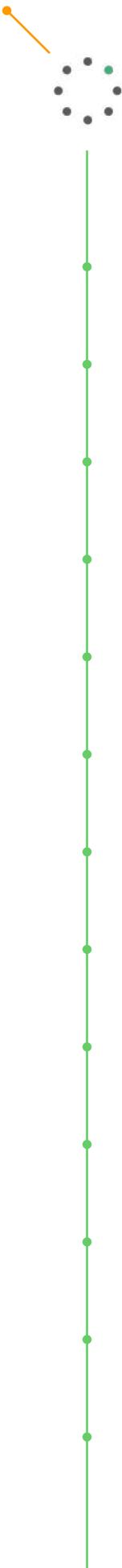


Rt Hon. Helen Clark

Former Co-Chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response



H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf



Glossary of terms

ACT-A	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator
AU	African Union
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
COs	Country Offices
CSO	Civil society organisations
C-TAP	COVID-19 Technology Access Pool
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccine Facility
COVAX AMC	COVID-19 Vaccine Advance Market Commitment
EU	European Union
FIF	Financial Intermediary Fund
G7	Group of 7
G20	Group of 20
HICS	High-income countries
HLIP	G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response
IHR	International Health Regulations (2005)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INB	Intergovernmental Negotiating Body
LMICs	low-and middle-income countries
MPP	Medicines Patent Pool
mRNA	messenger RNA
MS	Member States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PGA	President of the General Assembly
PHEIC	Public Health Emergency of International Concern
PPR	Pandemic Preparedness and Response
SARS-CoV-2	the virus that causes COVID-19
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UHPR	Universal Health and Preparedness Review
UN	United Nations
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WB	World Bank
WGPR	Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHA75	The 75th World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

“Work has begun to prevent the next pandemic, but at the current pace, the transformative changes required will take years to complete.”

*— H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
— The Rt. Hon. Helen Clark*





The impact: Why this pandemic must be the last

The Independent Panel's report called for specific, urgent actions to end the COVID-19 emergency. That has not happened, and the consequences are more illness and death, health systems stretched to breaking point, deepening social divides, and more losses to economies and households.

Spikes in infections and deaths resulted in massive disruptions to workplaces and schools, and long-COVID risks leading to longer-term health consequences for a proportion of those infected.^[7] Each death is a personal loss, and has reverberating health, social and economic impacts on families, communities, and countries.^[8]

These losses were preventable but not prevented. The inequitable market-based system that existed before SARS-CoV-2 led to inevitable, deadly gaps in access in low- and middle-income countries. Too many countries delayed implementing or politicised measures that protect people from infection and disease.

We still do not know the full extent of the pandemic's impact, but since the Panel's report a year ago:

2.8 million more people are reported to have died due to COVID-19, almost certainly a significant undercount with estimates based on excess mortality ranging from 14 to 21 million deaths since the emergence of SARS-CoV-2.^[1-4]

352 million more people were officially reported to be infected, a small fraction of the likely billion or more who were infected or reinfected.^[1, 6]

COVID-19 was a leading cause of mortality worldwide in 2020/21.

Figure 1: Reported infections and mortality since 01 January 2020

Source: Our World in Data





“This virus won’t go away just because countries stop looking for it. It is still spreading, it is still changing, and it is still killing.”

– Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

Vaccine inequity continues – originally a problem of a smaller supply hoarded by the wealthy, and now a problem of an excess of available vaccines, insufficient financial supports to deliver them, and shifting priorities.

In 2021, lower-income countries were demanding vaccines, and had largely no choice but to rely on donations. When they came at last, they were too often poorly coordinated, doses were expiring, and there wasn’t the financial and material support needed to turn vaccines into vaccinations. Wealthy countries stated a clear preference for certain vaccine types, and lower-income countries cannot be faulted for wanting the same choice. Now in 2022, much of the world is signalling a desire to move on from the pandemic or is focused on other health and geopolitical issues. The 70% vaccination target set by the World Health Organization (WHO) for all populations by mid-2022 is not close to being met.^[9]

The current generation of vaccines has minimal effectiveness against transmission, in particular of the currently circulating strains, but evidence suggests vaccination including a booster dose continues to offer significant protection against hospitalisation and death for vulnerable populations.^[10] Although ongoing research is required to fully understand duration of protection, the failure to complete primary vaccination or offer booster doses is leaving vulnerable populations further exposed.

A perilous downward trend in the number of tests conducted per day so far in 2022 leaves the world at risk of flying blind, trying to fight a disease that can’t be seen.^[11] Tests are essential to successful ‘test and treat’ programming, and widespread genomic sequencing is needed to expose virus mutations. However, despite warnings that Omicron, a new variant of concern, was spreading at speed, many countries were late to prepare communities for the inevitable. Record infections followed together with another spike in major health and economic disruptions. A new wave is forecast for the Northern Hemisphere by autumn this year and is already showing signs of spread.^[12]

Political leaders have every reason – the opportunity and the know-how – to stop a pandemic like this from happening again. The Independent Panel has provided actionable recommendations that, taken as a package, can help to secure the future through leadership, new finance, dramatically improved surveillance, a stronger WHO, and equitable access to pandemic tools.

Figure 2: Inequity: Share of people who completed the initial vaccination protocol as of 01 May 2022

Total number of people who received all doses prescribed by the initial vaccination protocol, divided by the total population of the country.

Source: Our World in Data

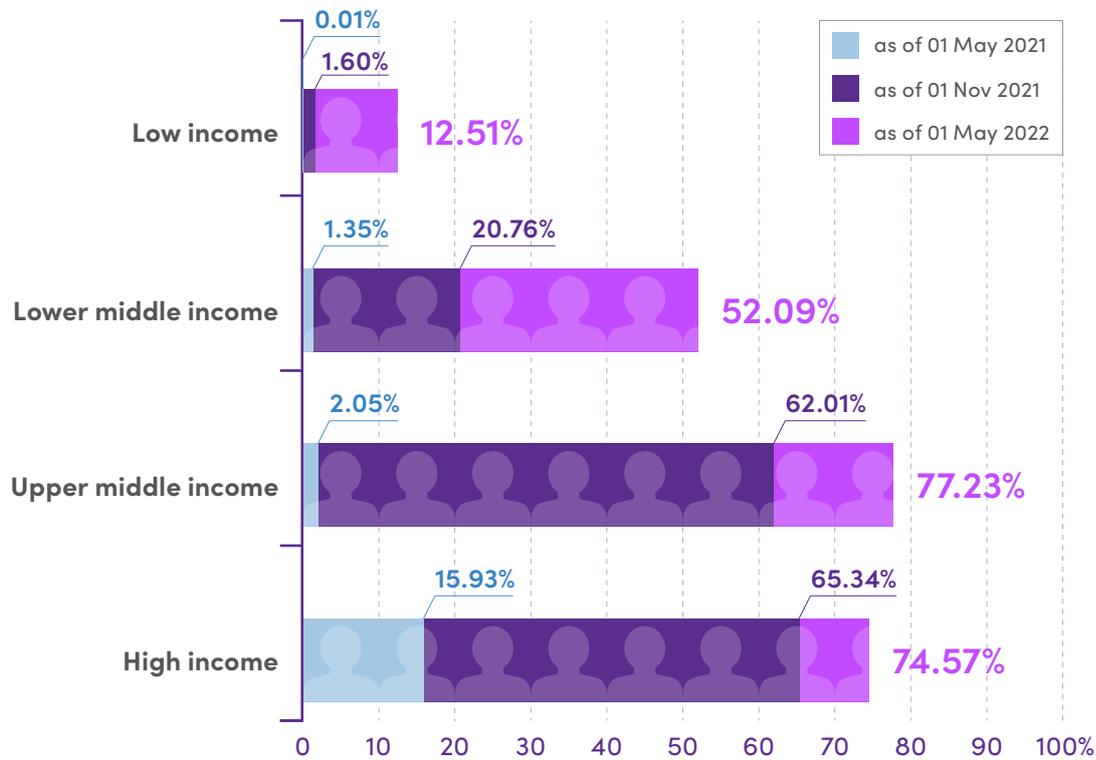
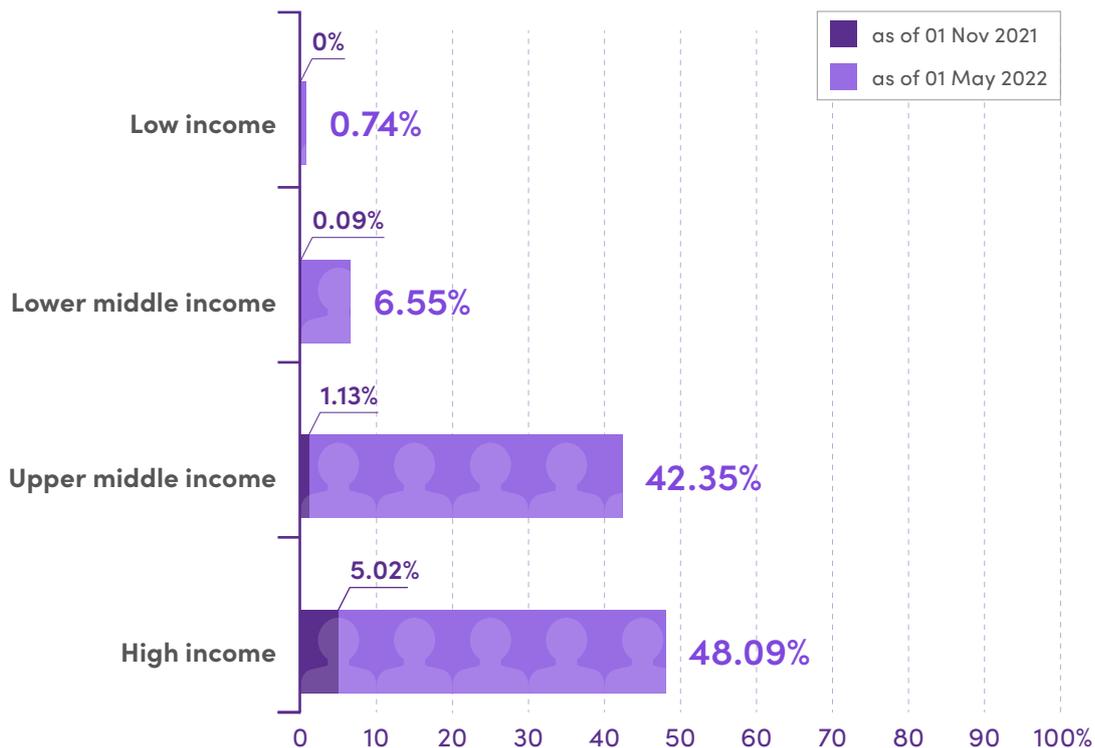


Figure 3: COVID-19 vaccine boosters administered per 100 people as of 01 May 2022

Total number of vaccine booster doses administered, divided by the total population of the country. Booster doses are doses administered beyond those prescribed by the original vaccination protocol.

Source: Our World in Data



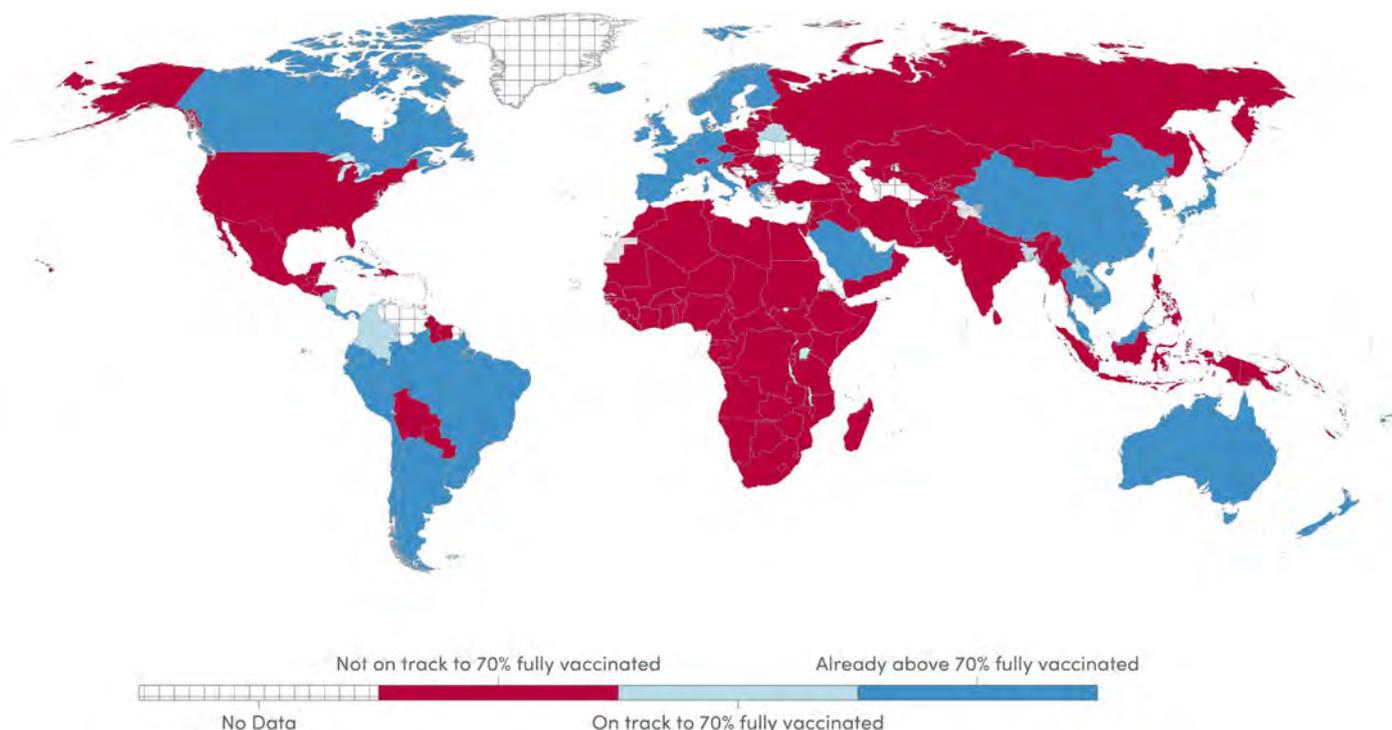
The social and economic impacts are widespread:

- Prior to the pandemic the World Bank estimated that 581 million people would be living in extreme poverty in 2022. The combined impacts of the pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine and increasing inflation are projected to lead to **up to 95 million more people in extreme poverty this year compared to pre-pandemic projections.**^[5]
- In emerging market economies, the debt-to-GDP ratio reached 60% in 2021, up from about 40% in 2013, and for low-income countries, which often have less debt-carrying capacity, the median debt is now nearly double that of 2013.^[13]
- **Lost schooling and school dropout rates will increase the number of children who are illiterate at age 10.** In low and middle-income countries, it is projected this may increase to as much as 70% and cost up to \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings.^[14]
- **The impact on gender inequalities is stark.** Women were reporting a 26% risk of employment loss by September 2021, compared to 20.4% for men. Women were almost twice as likely to have to forgo work in order to be caregivers, and girls were 21% more likely than boys to drop out of school.^[15]

Figure 4: Countries not on track to achieve the 70% vaccination coverage target by 30 June 2022

Source: Data collection and projections by Our World in Data, based on official sources as of 5 May 2022.

Note: OWID excludes countries that have not reported data for more than 30 days.





Some progress, much process

Notwithstanding the complexity of reform in a multilateral system, there are notable efforts to make progress on a number of the Independent Panel's recommendations. To date, much of the progress lies in the establishment of processes rather than the achievement of results, but some are likely to bear fruit.

Political leadership – welcome but not enough

Many high-level groupings and institutions have helped raise the profile of pandemic preparedness and response. These include the President of the United Nations General Assembly's high-level dialogue on vaccination; two virtual Global Summits including the most recent this month co-chaired by Belize, Germany, Indonesia, Senegal, and the United States; discussion at the G7 and G20; ongoing efforts by international institutions including the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the IMF; and regional leadership, including from the Africa CDC.

The May 12 Global COVID-19 Summit was evidence of the unique way Heads of State and Government can convene and motivate a range of actors to commit to pandemic preparedness and response. Convened by Heads of State who represent the 90 countries of the AU, CARICOM, the G7 and the G20, it resulted in engagement and commitments from national governments, UN agencies, funds, and foundations, research organizations, the private sector, and civil society.

WHO, surveillance and the international legal regime

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) is result of the work of the WHO Member State *Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR)*, which has been considering 131 recommendations made by four review groups including the Independent Panel. Their report is being presented to this year's WHA.^[16]

A major process output was the establishment of an INB to “draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.” Texts are due to be ready for agreement at the World Health Assembly in May 2024.^[16]

Through the WGPR, countries are also discussing a process to amend specific provisions of the International Health Regulations (IHR). It is to be hoped that amendments would give WHO more authority to report and investigate pandemic threats rapidly.^[16] The IHR amendments process may also be recommended to be complete only in May 2024.

In an effort to improve global surveillance, WHO established a new “Biohub” for pathogen sharing in May 2021. In September 2021, WHO, with Germany’s support, announced a “WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence,” based in Berlin.^[17]

More WHO financial independence

The Panel recommended that Member States should increase their assessed contributions to two-thirds of the budget of WHO’s base program budget; and that a replenishment model should be established for the remainder.

The WHO Working Group on Sustainable Financing, involving all Member States, has recommended that assessed contributions cover 50% of the base program budget. The Working Group will also recommend that the WHO Secretariat explore the feasibility of a replenishment mechanism to cover the remainder of the budget.^[18] The Working Group aims to secure formal agreement at the World Health Assembly this month.

Member States are also asking for internal reforms at WHO to ensure more efficiency and accountability in program budgeting and reporting.

An increase to 50% would be based on the 2022/2023 budget; ratcheted up over the next four programme budgets. This leaves a potential eight years of more voluntary funding and earmarking for WHO – and ample opportunity for another serious health threat to emerge. Sustainable coverage of 50% of the base budget, based on the 2022/23 budget, also raises the question of the total budget required.

Establishment of a new pandemic fund

The Independent Panel, and also the G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (HLIP), recommended the establishment of a new financing facility or fund, to provide annual contributions in the range of \$10–\$15 billion annually for preparedness, to which all countries would contribute based on an ability-to-pay formula.^[19] The Independent Panel’s report also stressed that in a time of crisis, countries must be able to rely on draw-downs from a \$50–100 billion surge fund, in contrast to the trickle of funds made available in the first months of this pandemic.

Recently the G20, chaired by Indonesia, has announced consensus in the group to establish a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for pandemic preparedness and response.^[20] The Indonesia G20 Chair is now consulting with countries on governance and operations. The World Bank is working with partners to establish the fund by June and open it later this year. This Fund received commitment of support at the May 12 2022 Summit, with pledges of the European Union, the United States, Germany and the Wellcome Trust totalling US\$962 million.^[21]

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) establishment of a new Resilience and Sustainability Trust, with \$50 billion available to low- and middle-income countries to build resilience and ensure a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 is welcome, although it is important to note that this is loan financing and relies on countries voluntarily channelling their special drawing rights for the benefit of poorer or more vulnerable countries^[22]

Equity: movement on knowledge and technology transfer

There have been efforts to expand equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics, and therapies. The Oxford–AstraZeneca partnership was initiated as a promising non-profit agreement, with built-in voluntary licensing.^[23] Novavax and Johnson & Johnson worked with partners in India and South Africa to scale up local manufacturing capacity.^[24, 25] Drs. Peter Hotez and Maria Elena Bottazzi, of the Baylor College of Medicine in the U.S. developed a patent-free vaccine, aimed at providing “vaccine for all.”^[26] Chinese vaccine manufacturers developed products initially for national use, were then able to rapidly sell and distribute hundreds of millions of doses globally and establish regional manufacturing.^[25] Donated doses were an important source of COVAX’s vaccine supply in 2021 when demand was highest, accounting for 60% of the doses the initiative delivered that year (543 million out of 910 million).^[28]

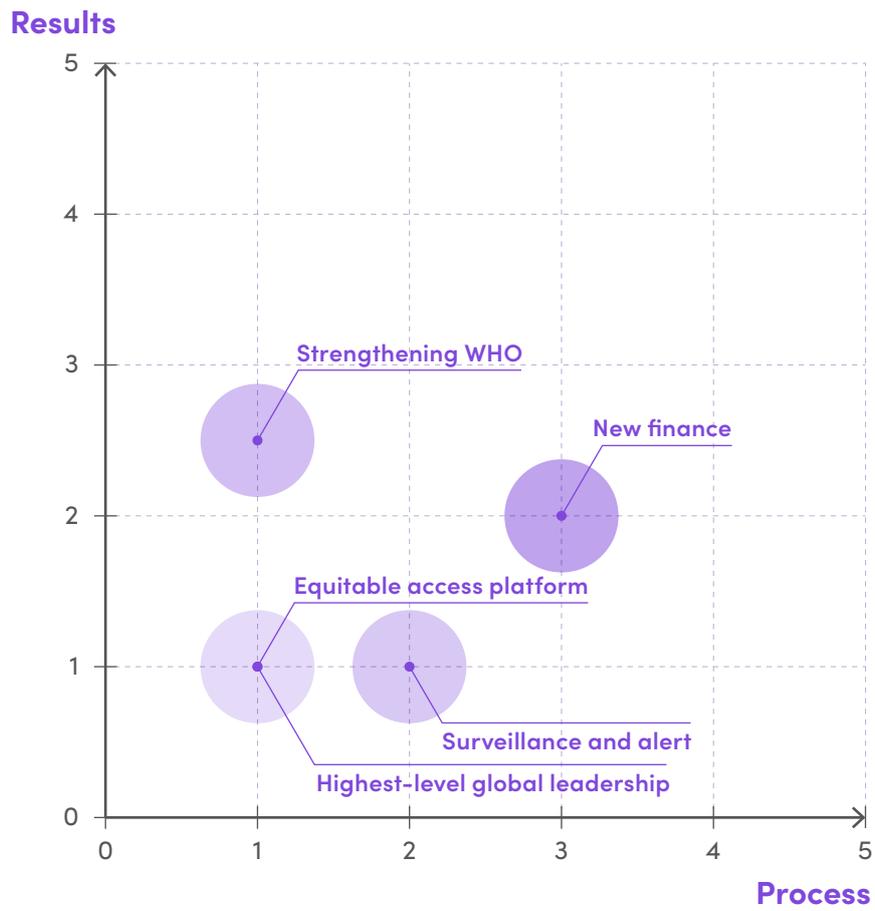
The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), formed rapidly in anticipation of global needs, mobilised billions of dollars; has delivered 1.5 billion doses of vaccines, 150 million diagnostic tests, expanded genomic sequencing capacity and mobilised US \$187 million for oxygen supplies.^[29]

The mRNA hub in South Africa which is producing and trialling its own mRNA vaccine, together with a pledge to deliver its know-how and materials to hubs distributed across regions that have had no capacity, shows promise.^[28]

Moderna and BioNTech have announced plans to set up manufacturing in Africa.^[31] Merck and Pfizer have made voluntary licensing agreements with the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) for their antiviral therapies.^[32]

This month, the MPP and WHO’s COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) agreed transparent, global, nonexclusive licencing agreements with the U.S. National Institutes of Health, for the development of therapies, vaccines and diagnostics. These licenses are intended to allow manufacturers from around the world to work with MPP and C-TAP to make technologies accessible to people in poorer countries.^[21]

Figure 5: Much process, few results





Actions needed now to fix a still broken system

1. Equitable access to tools now and always

Science has delivered a range of new lifesaving tools at impressive speed, but the status-quo market-driven system has failed to deliver them equitably.

ACT-A, the current major coordinated mechanism for delivering essential COVID-19 supplies to low- and middle-income countries was set up to provide access to vaccines, diagnostic tests, genomic sequencing capacity and oxygen.^[29] Measured against a standard of equitable and timely access, it has not met expectations.

ACT-A has been challenged by insufficient funding, the realities of the marketplace, wealthier country hoarding, by rejection of certain vaccines, export bans, poor management of donated doses, a growing view that the pandemic is 'over' and a turn to other priorities; and, now, oversupply of vaccines that protect against illness and death, but do not block transmission, with not enough funds to deliver them.^[33]



“Vaccine inequity drives the spread of viral variants. The two-tiered systems of haves and have nots means low-income countries are being left in a perpetual game of catch-up... it is a game where the prize is life in an uneven playing field.”

– Dr Ayoade Alakija, WHO Special Envoy for ACT-A

A lack of equity has also affected diagnostic testing and treatments.

Lower-income countries comprise more than 50% of the world's population but have conducted just 21.5% of tests globally to date.^[11]

New life saving “test and treat” strategies are being implemented in high-income countries, while people in poor nations have very limited access to tests and therapeutics. Voluntary licensing agreements for antivirals are a step in the right direction, but doses will not be more widely available until 2023.^[34]

Governance of ACT-A, involving multiple partners with their own existing governance, has been a major challenge. It has been criticised for lack of meaningful inclusivity.^[35]

Act-A's strategic plan and budget for 2021-2022 comes to an end in September, with no announced plans for its continuation. **An independent evaluation of ACT-A is urgently needed.** The co-chairs of the ACT-A Facilitation Council have announced that they will initiate such an evaluation and hope to have it completed by the end of the year. Based

on lessons from the evaluation, **ACT-A should be reconfigured as an end-to-end platform that puts equity and public health at its heart.** There needs to be an urgent transition to such a platform in order to avoid more inequitable gaps in delivery. When new tools for tackling COVID-19 are available, such as a variant-specific vaccine, wealthier nations could once again rapidly buy up supplies, while poorer ones would have to wait, or make use of outdated or less effective tools.

Despite the limitations of ACT-A, it is the mechanism currently available and should be supported. It faces a significant funding gap of US\$13.64 billion, US\$7.5 billion of which is urgent particularly for vaccine delivery, procurement of treatments, scale-up of diagnostics, and oxygen.^[36] A failure to fund it adequately would worsen inequalities in the short-term, lead to more preventable illness and death, and end support for critical surveillance required to detect new variants.

Progress on tackling issues surrounding intellectual property and technology transfer has also been inadequate and far too slow. The Panel called for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and WHO to convene major vaccine-producing countries and manufacturers to get agreement on voluntary licencing and technology transfer. The Panel said that if there was no action within three months, an urgent 'waiver to the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) should come into force. Neither has happened so far.

Despite valiant efforts and leadership by the current WTO Director-General, the agreement by over 100 countries, and the steadfast push of civil society, the objections of a handful of influential countries have led to failure during a pandemic. **Without a change of approach to consider pandemic tools as global public goods, we will see a repeat of these drawn-out processes when a new pandemic threat emerges.** The current proposed agreement after over two years of negotiation, that only covers vaccines and not diagnostics or therapeutics shows the limitations of the current approach.^[37]

Action on knowledge and technology transfer to ensure that vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments can be produced nearer to countries and to improve the resilience of supply chains has been mixed. The lack of transparency surrounding the various initiatives makes efforts to assess



“Vaccine equity is not a matter of volumes; it is ensuring equitable access to appropriate vaccines at the right time for optimal health impact.”

– Els Torrelee, Visiting Fellow, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, University College London^[a]

[a] Torrelee, E. Vaccine equity is not for sale. PLOS Blogs Speaking of Medicine and Health 2022 [cited 2022; Available from: <https://speakingofmedicine.plos.org/2022/05/03/vaccine-equity-is-not-for-sale/>]

their impact challenging. **The mRNA hub in South Africa, and the promise to deliver its know-how and materials to hubs distributed across regions that have had no capacity is a laudable development.**^[30] But these should be scaled strategically, ensuring that demand and procurement are also in place. Aspen Pharmaceutical's situation, whereby it recently had to stop production in South Africa for lack of orders, is a cautionary tale, but should not discourage the strategic expansion of manufacturing in all regions, in order to build self-sufficiency.^[38]

Equitable access: What must happen next

1. ACT-A should be rapidly fully financed to ensure ongoing access to the tools available to tackle COVID-19 in LMICs.
2. Governments should adopt a comprehensive TRIPS waiver immediately.
3. There needs to be a comprehensive and independent evaluation of ACT-A with the full inclusion of civil society.
4. Lessons from the ACT-A evaluation should define a pathway to establish an end-to-end global platform for equitable access to countermeasures.
5. Ensure transparency within existing and future initiatives to bolster regional capacity to produce all countermeasures. Investments must be in the public's interest built for different vaccine platforms, together with diagnostics and treatments with production that can be scaled as needed.
6. Governments should transparently report research and development financing, and condition public financing on agreements that guarantee technology transfer and voluntary licencing to ensure equitable distribution.



2. Financing that involves and serves every country

Funding for pandemic preparedness and response is a global public good. The COVID-19 experience painfully shows that spending billions would have saved trillions.^[19] The Panel found preparedness funds were too little; and response funds were too slow, wholly inadequate in scale, and over the sustained response, resulted in lower-income countries incurring more debt.^[39]

The G20 Chair now has an opportunity to consult widely beyond the G20 membership and recommend a legitimate, inclusive and effective financial modality in the short months ahead. This is an opportunity for all countries to work together and create a model through successful multilateralism which would herald a new era in funding and governance to combat pandemic threats.

The experience of ACT-A unfortunately reveals the limits of a system that evolved to become overly donor-driven. A Financing Modality will not succeed as a donor-driven fund. **All countries must be incentivised to contribute based on an ability-to-pay formula, with the guarantee that lower-income countries will benefit in both preparedness, and in rapid disbursement of surge funds during a health emergency,** based on pre-arranged preparedness and response plans.

The Panel recommended that funds be granted based on identified gaps through existing international and regional organisations, according to their mandate and experience. As the suggested FIF is designed, architects must assess the most efficient, experienced mechanisms for disbursing preparedness and response funds. WHO, for example, should not lead as it is not a funding agency but should support the World Bank to highlight gaps identified through systematic reviews, and should support countries to design and cost preparedness and emergency plans.

Finance: What must happen next

1. The G20 Chair must consult widely on the suggested financial modality including with non-G20 countries, civil society and all relevant entities.
2. There should be an agreement on a formula-based funding mechanism based on an ability-to-pay and a prioritisation of funds that are additional to official development assistance.
3. The process should develop clear, strategic guidance on what the FIF will fund. It should prioritize filling gaps in the current systems for preparedness and response and generating global public goods which might otherwise be under-produced instead of establishing its own operating system.
4. Arrangements should be in place to finance both long-term preparedness and rapid response for pandemic threats, whether through a single fund or complementary mechanism.
5. The FIF should be linked to a leader-level pandemic preparedness and response governance body.

3. A stronger WHO and a new system for surveillance, detection, and alert

The current legal regime and governance processes of WHO remain largely unchanged since before the emergence of SARS-CoV-2, and reform efforts are process-driven. Should a new pathogen of pandemic potential begin to spread in the weeks or months ahead, there is no guarantee it would be identified in time to take measures to contain it, and WHO's authority to report it globally remains the same as it was in January 2020.

A major recommendation was that WHO establish a new system for surveillance, based on transparency by all parties, using state-of-the-art digital tools to connect information around the world. New pathogens are emerging, the digital tools exist, but the will to be fully transparent is yet absent.

Such a surveillance system is complex, and countries may raise the issue of whether it impinges on their sovereignty. Yet, countries can only benefit from rapid and transparent identification and reporting of pandemic threats. **Success in stopping pandemics will come only with solidarity, a mutual affirmation and action to ensure that no country is a weak link.**

This matter is also tied to strengthening WHO authority. The Panel recommended WHO be given the authority to report potential health emergencies immediately and to investigate health threats without impediment. When warranted, WHO should use a precautionary approach, for example, for new respiratory pathogens.

Some of this change could occur through amendments to the IHR, and the proposals of the United States attempt to address the speed of both reporting and investigating.^[37] While there is some support for these amendments, there is as yet no consensus.

Following negotiation and agreements on a pandemic accord and any IHR amendments — possibly not until May 2024 — both would require time to come into force. Acceptance of recommendations of any texts is not guaranteed, and the overall process is slow and vulnerable to political priorities not based on protecting people's health.

The Independent Panel recommended that the Director-General's and Regional Directors' terms should each be limited to one term of seven years. There is reference to the recommendation in the WGPR report to the 75th WHA, but there is no pathway as yet to address it.^[16]

There are ongoing discussions to strengthen the governance capacity of the Executive Board by establishing a Standing Committee for Emergencies. The EB will review draft Terms of Reference at its May meeting.^[41]

The WHO Secretariat has indicated that it is working to resource and equip WHO country offices sufficiently to respond to national technical requests, and to improve the quality of all WHO staff by depoliticising the recruitment process.^[16, 42]

Too many recommendations are being linked to the lengthy processes to reform the international legal regime.^[43]

A stronger WHO: What must happen next

1. The WHO should exercise authority to rapidly announce a potential pandemic threat should one arise before legal reform processes are concluded.
2. Work to create a modern surveillance system should be prioritised, as a system that mutually protects all countries and the world from pandemic threats. Benefits should supersede national security concerns.
3. WHO Member States should treat the recommended reforms with the urgency required and agree pathways to make decisions more rapidly, for later incorporation under a pandemic accord if necessary and practicable.
4. Member States should agree a clear plan to implement all recommendations, including the limit of the DG's and RDs' terms to one of seven years.
5. Flexible funding, the increase in assessed contributions to 50% of the base programme budget, and the proposal for a replenishment process for WHO should be approved and implemented without delay.
6. The WHO Secretariat should report on progress on its resourcing of country offices, and on processes towards depoliticising staff recruitment.

4. Sustained political leadership and accountability

COVID-19 paralysed much of the world for two years. Communities, national governments, foundations, regional bodies, banks, funds, just about every UN agency, civil society groups and nongovernmental organisations, the private sector – all mobilised to do what they could. Yet coordinated leadership at the highest level remained absent and has failed to bring sustained, essential cohesion to the pandemic response.

Now, political leaders have opportunity to join forces to ensure the world is much better prepared to face the next pandemic threat and to stop it. **High-Level political meetings of the UN General Assembly have historically elevated global health concerns such as HIV and antimicrobial resistance to the level of heads of state and secured the ensuing accountability.** The same should be done for pandemic preparedness and response.

When a disease outbreak rapidly spreads and upends almost every sector, threatens billions, and kills many millions of people, Presidents and Prime Ministers must work together, and lead a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to respond. The same approach and principles must apply to being ready for and preventing the risk from the next threat.

A measurable reform would be an inclusive leader-level health threats council that can galvanize political commitment to end the COVID-19 threat and bring cohesion to the multiple, uneven, and too often sclerotic reform efforts underway.

The Panel's proposal was that such a council should be independent but supportive of WHO if it is to fulfill its function and bring full cohesion to the global architecture for pandemic preparedness and response, which by its multisectoral nature is broader than that of WHO's mandate. The council would not seek to replace or recreate the functions of existing institutions, but rather identify gaps in preparedness and response, and ensure cohesion and accountability.

The council could be based in Geneva and should be serviced by a small nimble Secretariat that can coordinate the monitoring, advocacy, and accountability functions. Meetings must be frequent, particularly in the early stages, and the council must be ready to act rapidly at the first hint of a pandemic threat.

Political leadership: What must happen next

1. UN Member States should request a High-Level Meeting at the UN General Assembly that leads to a Political Declaration on pandemic preparedness and response.
2. A senior political leader-level council for pandemic preparedness and response should be established under the UNGA.

5. Get Prepared!

Two years into the COVID-19 emergency, it is far from clear whether countries are any better prepared for a new pandemic threat. The Independent Panel's report made a series of specific recommendations to enable assessment and bolstering of national preparedness and response capabilities through targeted investment and learning from COVID-19 responses. WHO has been following through on recommendations requiring its leadership.

The systems for assessing or measuring preparedness and assessing the robustness of those systems were shown to have low predictive value for how well countries were able to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.^[45] The Independent Panel called for WHO to set measurable targets and benchmarks for pandemic preparedness and response capacities. The WHO has indeed worked to develop dynamic preparedness metrics that



“This starts with communities. It doesn’t start in front of a computer sitting here in Seattle or sitting in Geneva. You have to be inside the community. You have to be where the problems are”

Dr Samba Sow, Director-General Centre for Vaccine Development – Mali ^[43]

consider wider population vulnerability, which will enable countries to assess their preparedness in a much more wholistic manner.^[46] These metrics are yet to be validated.

To promote accountability and identify gaps in preparedness, the Panel called for a process of Universal Periodic Peer Review to be coordinated by WHO. WHO has started consultations and is piloting a Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR) process. Pilots have been run in the Central African Republic, Iraq and Thailand, and another has begun in Portugal.^[47] This is a welcome first step and will go some way to answering whether countries are prepared, but methodological questions still need ironing out and it remains unclear how civil society and communities will be engaged in countries.

The Panel’s report also called for pandemic preparedness to be incorporated into Article IV consultations with the IMF to ensure that pandemic risks are treated as the systemic financial risks this pandemic has shown them to be. To date there have been no public signals from the IMF of this recommendation being adopted.

The Independent Panel called for ongoing investment in health and social protection systems to bolster resilience to adverse events, including pandemics. Countries are now facing significant fiscal and economic pressures from the pandemic, food and energy price spikes arising from the consequences of the invasion of the Ukraine, and high levels of inflation.^[13] **To date we are not seeing domestic investments in strengthened national public health institutions, health systems, and social protection systems on the scale needed to build resilience to threats that may develop.**

The Panel made a clear and specific call to strengthen the engagement of local communities in pandemic preparedness and response. Whilst there are many examples from this pandemic of innovative approaches to do that, it is clear from our consultations with civil society and reports from human rights organisations that this is not universally the case. Indeed, in some countries the pandemic has been used to shrink the space for civil society engagement.^[48]

Preparedness: What must happen next

1. National pandemic preparedness coordination should be overseen by heads of state and government, with sustained domestic investment in public health and the wider health and social protections systems for preparedness and response.
2. Governments should conduct transparent national reviews of their responses to COVID-19 and include all affected sectors including those in civil society.
3. The formalisation of a Universal Health Periodic Review (UHPR) should continue, and all governments should engage with the evolving process to develop a clearer overview of national preparedness and response gaps.
4. The IMF should implement the Panel's proposal regarding Article IV consultations.
5. Governments must continue to invest in, build partnerships with and listen to the perspectives of civil society and communities for pandemic preparedness and response at every level.

Figure 7: Sufficiency of current global efforts to end the COVID-19 emergency

Source: Co-Chairs' civil-society online survey (April-May 2022)

Overall, are current global efforts sufficient to end the current COVID-19 emergency? (n=47)

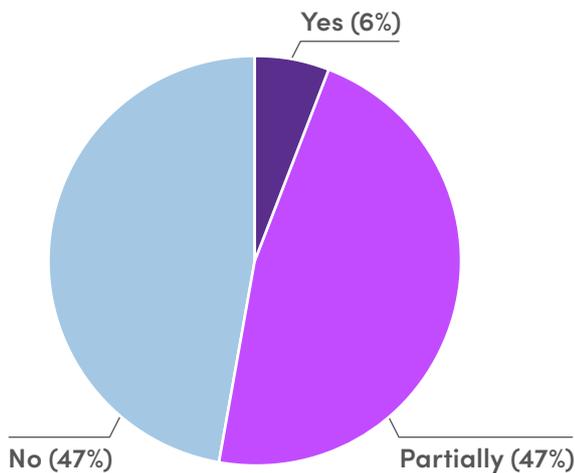
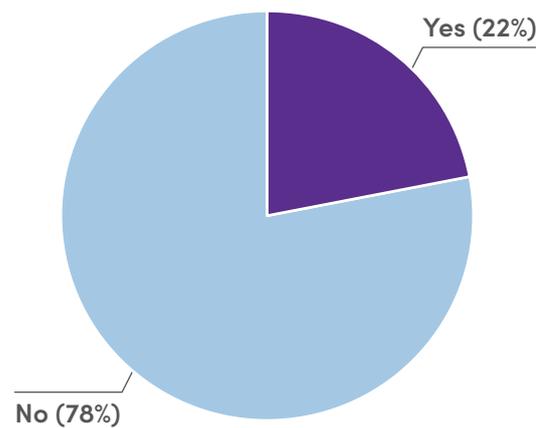


Figure 8: Inclusiveness of current reform processes

Source: Co-Chairs' civil-society online survey (April-May 2022)

Are the processes for current reforms open enough to all relevant voices? (n=50)



“Key populations, those on the margins, working class, will always be the ones who pay the price because for those in power, those who make the decisions, we don't matter.”

Mick Matthews, Global Network of Sex Work Projects

“Civil society engagement is key to bringing policies to life.”

Gisa Dang, Treatment Action Group





Constant learning, critical voices

The main report of the Independent Panel in May 2021 was an evidence-based exercise that drew upon opinion from experts in governments, the UN, academia and civil society. To inform this “one year on” report, we also consulted with many experts, including through academic roundtables, discussions with civil society, and an open invitation to take part in survey.

The paragraphs below capture themes which emerged from our consultations.

Bottom up – regional empowerment and self-sufficiency

Consistent messages came through on the importance of avoiding top-down solutions, and of the valuable leadership of regional institutions such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The limitations of the existing top-down global health order were exposed during this pandemic be it through inequitable access to tools to fight COVID-19 or a lack of developing context-specific responses.

Pandemics prey on unhealthy populations

Another important theme was linking pandemic preparedness to wider concepts of population health. Most COVID-19 deaths where accurate data exists occurred amongst vulnerable populations because of age or pre-existing co-morbidities.^[49] Building healthier populations builds resilience to pandemic threats, and action to prevent chronic diseases such as improving nutrition, tackling air pollution, and controlling tobacco use, are vital for pandemic preparedness and response. Governments must prioritise the healthy populations agenda, take a health-in-all policies approach and apply a health equity lens to reduce vulnerability to both new variants of concern and future pandemic threats.

One Health: prevent threats at their source

The interconnectedness of pandemic threats with other global challenges came up frequently. There is an urgent need also to reduce the likelihood of zoonotic spill over events upstream, which requires action to mitigate biodiversity loss and other ecosystem damage. A recent study in Nature suggested that if the world warmed by 2 degrees, in mammals alone there would be over 4000 incidents of cross-species viral spread by

2070.^[50] It is vital that governments honour their commitments to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and set and meet ambitious targets under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to mitigate the risk of pandemics.

The needs of people facing crisis

In the early days of this pandemic crisis, humanitarian actors worked quickly to establish risk communication, resource coordination, and community engagement platforms as core components of their response efforts.^[51] Actors further built on existing programming and pre-existing relationships with vulnerable populations to integrate COVID-19 prevention, testing, and treatment measures. Experience with other health emergencies, such as Zika, cholera, and Ebola, make clear that empowering communities to take charge of their response is key for successful compliance with control and mitigation measures.^[52]

Decades of experience also show that a “one size fits all” approach is inadequate for any population affected by a health crisis.^[53] As leaders work to strengthen the global capacities for pandemic preparedness and response, they must ensure that the needs, perspectives, and ideas of migrants, displaced persons, and other vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises are represented and not forgotten.

Rebuilding trust must start now

Trust has been an emerging theme within all of our consultations. Evidence shows the role it plays in determining the success of countries' initial and ongoing responses. Responding to pandemics requires leaders to behave in ways that foster trust in institutions. Examples of corruption, a lack of transparent decision-making, poor risk communication, noncompliance with restrictions, mixed messages and failure to admit mistakes all undermined messaging and trust in the current pandemic. **Governments must invest in communities and risk communication as a priority now, as trust cannot just ‘happen,’ when a new emergency strikes.**



Final words

COVID-19 has killed millions and affected the life of almost everyone on this planet, thriving upon and exacerbating inequalities. Complacency has set in among those with access to tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat COVID-19, and those tools are far from universally accessible. We must continue to document the evolution of the virus, respond to new waves and not squander hard won gains.

This can and must be the last pandemic of such devastation. This pandemic requires ongoing highest-level attention even as the world grapples with rising geopolitical tensions, inflation, and the impacts of climate change. Inequities continue, and dangerous new variants could emerge at any time. The deaths of millions due to COVID-19 cannot be in vain.

There is progress to ensure the world is better prepared for the next pandemic threat. But **at the current pace**, processes to ensure a stronger WHO, modern surveillance systems, adequate financing, equity and better governance **will take years to deliver**.

For now we remain stuck with largely the same tools and system we had at the outset of 2020 when the COVID virus first emerged. The question remains **if a new pathogen with pandemic potential were to cause an outbreak tomorrow, would the world be better prepared** to prevent it from becoming a pandemic and be able to respond effectively if it did? **Our assessment is no.**

One year ago the Independent Panel laid out a roadmap for how to transform the system for Pandemic Preparedness and Response. Given the multitude of sectors, organizations, and institutions required to face-down pandemic threats it is self-evident **what's missing now is action-oriented decisive political leadership** at the highest level to bring cohesion and urgency to achieve a transformed system for pandemic preparedness and response.

We urge Member States to begin a process at the UN General Assembly that leads to the negotiation of a political declaration giving momentum for reform, and including agreement to create a Head of State and Government-level Council to maintain momentum around and pursue accountability for pandemic preparedness and response.

Now, it is in all countries' interest to contribute to the new pandemic fund. It requires at least US\$ 10 billion annually, and a global effort to reach this goal, with funds additional to ODA, can provide a guarantee that lower-income countries can access the funds required for preparedness, and rapidly for response.

The tools we have now need to be deployed to protect the vulnerable, and access to future, even more effective, tools cannot be monopolised by the highest bidder. A market-driven approach simply does not work.

Governments must evaluate their own responses to COVID-19, learn from them and invest nationally to fill gaps. Communities must be placed at the heart of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic now and to health threats of the future.

The next pandemic threat will not wait, and the risks of delay of reforms are too great. Since the start of 2022 alone, there have been outbreaks of avian influenza, cholera, yellow fever, dengue, measles, Lassa fever, cholera, polio, MERS-CoV, Ebola, monkeypox and acute hepatitis of unknown aetiology in children reported to WHO.^[54] **A new threat is just one animal-to-human spill over away.**

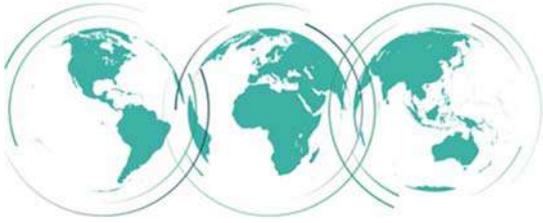


“Climate change is speeding up the cycle of pandemics, making the next outbreak inevitable. The next virus may kill even more people and cause even greater economic disruption.”

Dr. Joy St. John, ED of the Caribbean Public Health Agency at the May 12 Summit

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Session Three

Global Digital Governance: Is Consensus on New Rules Possible?

Long Reads

A Post-COVID-19 Digital Bretton Woods

Apr 17, 2020 | ROHINTON P. MEDHORA, TAYLOR OWEN

WATERLOO, CANADA – The global COVID-19 pandemic has turned the once unthinkable into legislation. Governments are underwriting business and health care, and regulating personal behavior, in unprecedented ways. The world's primary multilateral financial institutions – the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – are being asked to throw away their rulebooks to save the world's imperiled developing economies.

But when the pandemic passes, a fiscal reckoning in some form will be essential. After all, the bill for the pandemic will one day fall due, and governments will need to be far more certain than they are today that businesses and individuals will be able to pay their fair share of tax. This will occur in a global-governance environment that was already changing radically, owing to the impact of digital technologies.

Long before the pandemic, there was a growing need to rethink global institutions for a world of intangibles. Now, that process is being accelerated, and will soon usher in a period in which the Bretton Woods institutions, the pillars of global governance since World War II, will be judged and most likely reinvented.

The Tax Gap

In late November 2019, a dozen EU member states voted against a proposed rule to force multinational companies to report the profits they earn within each EU country. This modest measure would have enabled European countries to collect revenue from their own citizens' commercial activity on platforms such as Amazon, Facebook, and Google. The digital giants operate around the world, yet their reported profits are disproportionately concentrated in countries with the lowest corporate-tax rates.

One such tax haven – and one of the countries that opposed the rule change – is Ireland, whose tax policies have helped fuel a global race to the bottom. Half of all corporate taxes paid in the country come from just ten multinationals, and 20-60% of government revenues from corporate taxes are due to “excess,” which the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council defines as “[revenues] beyond what would be projected based on the economy’s underlying performance and historical/international norms.”

In other words, because a lack of governance and coordination utterly distorted the principles of equity and efficiency in tax regimes, Ireland is taxing profits earned elsewhere. And this is but one example of the broader disconnect between digital platforms and their sociopolitical context, which is sure to widen after the COVID-19 crisis has passed and the budgetary reckoning begins.

Digital Coordination

Globally, our digital infrastructure is undergoing a sweeping transformation. Whereas the first wave of Internet expansion featured the proliferation of open networks, we are now in the midst of a digital arms race. The competition between software stacks, data-collection capacities, and digital business models is creating clashes across developed and emerging economies, and within democratic and authoritarian countries alike.

At issue is the core architecture of the digital economy itself. The fundamental dynamics of the current framework are straining global-governance institutions, and demanding that we create a new set of legal, regulatory, and ethical structures. While the natural growth of the Internet and the digital economy appears gradual and evolutionary, we should recognize that we are actually on the cusp of revolutionary change.

Questions about digital governance will be central to how we reconstruct our post-pandemic world. Digital technologies and the coronavirus are both manifestations of an era of under-managed hyper-globalization, and the pandemic threatens to deepen the economic, geopolitical, and technological divide between the United States and China. At the national level, from governments’ ability to raise resources and fund public policies to concerns about privacy, civil liberties, and security, technology-adjacent issues that were rising on the political agenda before the current crisis will demand even more urgent attention now.

After all, governments emerging from the current economic shock will be in dire need of revenue. And after the society-wide lockdown, technologies that have become deeply embedded in our lives more or less overnight will need to be scrutinized. As recent controversies over the videoconferencing service Zoom show, policymakers should take a hard look at issues such as data privacy, surveillance technology, the inequities embedded in algorithms, and the integrity of our information ecosystem.

Clearly, the *status quo* of an untaxed and largely unregulated platform economy is no longer tenable. As in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the world again faces a yawning gap between the social, economic, and political challenges we face and the design of our governance system. It is therefore time to imagine a new Bretton Woods for the post-pandemic digital era.

Virtual Concentration

The Internet was once defined primarily by an absence of centralization. But now what matters most are concentrations of data and computational capacity. The platform economy, artificial intelligence (AI), the surveillance state, and quantum computing all demand large-scale data sets, and all entrench centralized nodes of influence.

These new capacities are revolutionizing every economic sector that matters, from financial services, media, and public health, to transportation and agriculture. Having been built on top of the new digital infrastructure, computational capacity and AI-driven analytics now power the global economy.

Yet they are also concentrating decision-making and expanding the power of those who control the data. This new reality poses difficult policy challenges, because it produces winner-takes-all economic outcomes, concentrations of influence that circumvent democratic institutions, unanticipated national- and human-security threats, and entirely new geopolitical blocs.

Whereas the industrial economy was dominated by the production, trade, and consumption of tangible goods, the digital economy is built on the production, collection, and protection of information. It operates according to an entirely new system of incentives for production and innovation, and of the capture and distribution of financial gains. More often than not, the source of value lies not in production or exchange, but in intellectual-property rights. Indeed, IP is now the world's most valuable asset, accounting for 84% of the total value of S&P 500 companies.

This imbalance is reflected in the disconnect between existing financial governance institutions and the real economy. Just as trade agreements governing tangible assets seek to open up foreign markets and achieve economies of scale, the governance of intangibles must focus on IP and data protection. Unfortunately, the current, haphazard approach to governing the digital economy has reinforced geopolitical divides. China, the United States, and the European Union each represent distinct systems with incompatible norms, regulatory regimes, values, and corporate and state interests.

China, for example, built a firewall to protect major tech champions like Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba, and is now helping them expand their reach globally through its Belt and Road Initiative, even furnishing other authoritarian governments with

high-tech tools to help them maintain social and economic control. As Chinese soft power extends to the shipment of medical supplies during the pandemic, we are seeing a convergence of the country's strategic and digital infrastructure aims. Perhaps the personal protective equipment and other emergency support offered by China to France or Canada will shift those countries' thinking about how to award 5G contracts.

The US also has aggressively championed its own tech companies – Facebook, Amazon, Google, Netflix, Microsoft, and Apple, in particular – by securing favorable international rules about data sharing and collection, platform governance, and IP (most recently through the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement), while otherwise relying on a *laissez-faire* regulatory approach. Finally, the EU, which does not have any globally competitive digital tech companies, has been leading on standards and regulation, data-rights regimes, and competition policy, all of which it hopes to export as a mode of global influence and market creation.

Behind these rivalries are concrete issues that demand global governance. We need a forum through which to balance, and ideally reconcile, tensions between freedom of speech and privacy online, and now between privacy protections and the need for surveillance to track the spread of contagious diseases. Other points of contention include the governance of tangible and intangible assets, individual rights and collective protections, and incentives for innovation versus the need for appropriate regulation and adequate taxation.

Outdated and Defunct

The problem is that our current global institutions were built for a different world. When the world's leaders gathered at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944, they agreed on the design for a global institutional system to stop wars between countries and to regulate the functioning of the tangible economy.

But that system was for a world of borders, industrial production, and the trade of commodities and manufactured goods. The digital world is none of those things. As we emerge from another period of global destabilization, we are similarly in need of a new governance framework.

Looking ahead, one option, of course, is to acknowledge the complexity and technological challenges of regulating the rapidly changing digital sphere and delegate governance to the platforms themselves. This is already beginning to happen with digital payments and online content. Facebook's Libra initiative and its new content-moderation council, for example, point to a striking degree of corporate self-governance in domains where governments' jurisdiction was, until recently, unambiguous and unchallenged.

In our view, accepting the trend toward self-governance would be a profound, even dangerous, mistake. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown why public authorities need

to have access to accurate and timely data. Only then can they design interventions for the public good and prevent disinformation from worsening an already fraught situation. Despite significant efforts to police medical misinformation during the pandemic, the tech giants' financial incentives remain misaligned with the public interest.

After all, policing misinformation on digital platforms has never been about stopping individual bad actors, or about individual content-moderation decisions. Rather, it has always been about the design and the financial incentives of the platforms themselves.

A system dominated by a handful of firms in just two countries could never be trusted to protect the global public good. Addressing a structural vulnerability demands governance, not good will. Given the challenges posed by the new digital infrastructure, it is clear that our only option is to create new global governance institutions.

The starting point is straightforward. The international community should hold a conclave to articulate a vision, establish the “rules of the game,” and design an international institutional architecture for a new era. And, unlike in 1944, when the victors of World War II and a few delegations from poorer regions and countries occupied all of the seats at the table, we can hold such discussions in a truly global forum: the G20, whose members account for around 90% of global GDP, 80% of trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. The aim is not just to create new institutions and processes, but also to repurpose and strengthen existing ones where appropriate, as the current debate over the World Health Organization demonstrates.

What's the Program?

A digital Bretton Woods agenda should include five elements. First, we need a universal declaration on AI, given existing inequalities in access to data and analytic capacities, not to mention the far-reaching potential for misuse. Algorithms are not value-free. The data upon which they rely and the formulae guiding their decisions tend to reflect their designers' historically and socially conditioned biases.

Fortunately, an ethical framework for algorithms and AI can be universalized in the same way that personal protections have been through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other agreements. As the analogy implies, such commitments will not always be upheld in every detail by every country. But it would nonetheless create a global standard. A universal declaration on AI would act as a guide for national and sub-national legislation, as a framework for “naming and shaming” violations, and, ultimately, as a mechanism for applying penalties, following the example of the International Court of Justice.

Beyond the international human-rights regime, there are also analogous commitments to pursue universal health coverage and protections for children. What matters is not the specific model, but the intent behind it. An AI declaration would need to embody a broad-based normative consensus and be signed by as many countries as possible. Here, the recent G7 statement on AI offers a good starting point for holding a more global discussion on the ethos that should underpin transformative technologies in general, and AI in particular.

Second, we need a new forum for diplomatic and global coordination to overcome the geographic balkanization of data governance. The state-centric China zone and the firm-centric US zone are mirror images of each other: in neither case do individuals have sovereignty or control over their personal data. By contrast, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation offers a higher degree of control to individuals on questions of privacy and the use of their data.

From an international perspective, the biggest problem is that the three zones cannot "talk" to one another. As a result, no tech firm can be truly global, because it has become impossible to comply with the rules of one zone without violating those of the others. The situation is a recipe for dysfunction, rising transaction costs, and lost credibility for firms and governments. Citizens in any given zone will rightly question whether the spaghetti bowl of rules and protocols are really in their interests. And then there's the question of India, Canada, Japan, Australia, and the vast majority of the world's countries that are left to make up their own hybrid rules, or to piggyback on one of the three other zones.

Clearly, global diplomacy is in order. Airing mutually incompatible viewpoints and searching for common ground was precisely the point of the original Bretton Woods Conference, where delegates debated exchange rates and global trade, among many other issues. Today, we need to figure out how to strike a balance between the individual, the firm, and the state when it comes to managing data. That process will not be smooth, and the result probably will not look particularly elegant.

But that is the nature of compromise. Power politics and individual personalities certainly will play a role in the outcome. What matters at the end of the day, however, is not whether we have achieved some abstract ideal, but whether we have improved upon a dysfunctional and unsustainable *status quo*.

It Must Be Global

The third item on a digital Bretton Woods agenda should be a new global regime to address the problem of tax arbitrage by multinationals whose value is derived largely from intangibles. Last July, France decided unilaterally to introduce a 3% tax on digital services, effectively targeting the US tech giants directly. But the OECD, meanwhile, has been developing a multilateral framework that would prevent tax avoidance without openly discriminating against specific firms.

Still, the question of taxation goes beyond revenues. The digital economy is driven by proprietary technology, most of which is created in a few hubs around the world. It is the nature of the innovation economy to privilege first movers, strategic behavior, and economies of agglomeration. As a result, and despite many unknowns about what the future holds, one thing is clear: Absent significant public-policy responses, income and wealth disparities will worsen, both within and between countries.

Because so much IP is generated by multinationals, profits from technological advances will (correctly) accrue to those firms. Though the trend in recent years has been toward consumption-based taxation and away from corporate taxation, the nature of the digital economy suggests that this should be reversed.

The outsize rents of large, powerful, and agile multinational firms have put tax-base erosion and profit shifting squarely on the agenda. But the solutions call for much more cross-border cooperation. At a time when governments worldwide are taking on unprecedented levels of debt to keep their economies functioning amid pandemic lockdowns, every source of revenue counts. We can no longer afford to permit clever arbitrage schemes to leave so much wealth untaxed.

Fourth, and on a related note, we need globally standardized definitions to measure all aspects of the digital and intangible economy. The current national statistical conventions are either not fully harmonized or not functioning at all. Just as the United Nations-based System of National Accounts introduced consistency in key economic statistics starting in 1947, an international convention on statistics for the digital era would provide a similar global public good. It would also form the basis for good research, policymaking, and civic action. As in so many other areas, policy interventions will be only as good as the data permit.

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Finally, and more broadly, the world needs a specific institution for policy and regulatory coordination. The current “light-touch” approach to digital regulation has eerie parallels to the regulation of the financial sector in many Western countries before the 2008 financial crisis. That disaster prompted the creation of the Financial Stability Board and other institutions that now strengthen and harmonize banking regulation at the global level.

Drawing on the FSB experience, the Centre for International Governance Innovation has proposed a Digital Stability Board (DSB) to shape global standards, regulations, and policies across the platform economy. This new body could offer advice on best practices, as well as insights about the regulatory and policy actions needed to address vulnerabilities in a timely manner. It could monitor risks arising from new technologies – including their impact on civil society – and develop regulatory and

policy interventions to address them. And it could ensure that its efforts complement the work of other institutions, such as the World Trade Organization.

Moreover, the global trade system itself needs new rules to reflect big data and AI, as well as an updated framework with which to assess new technologies' implications for trade and trade-rule compliance. The COVID-19 pandemic provides an entry point for the DSB, or a similar global policy-coordination body, which could start by focusing on issues related to the health sector and health data.

Proven Models

Together, emerging digital infrastructures have created a new layer of operational capacity within the international system. They have enabled new forms of collective action and seamless communication on a mass global scale. But while these capacities have yielded tremendous benefits – by, for example, empowering new civic movements, improving social and political inclusion, and driving income growth – they have also come with social, political, and economic costs.

Digital platforms have been used to sow distrust and to organize extremist groups. Harmful speech is being both amplified and targeted at vulnerable and suggestible audiences. In the US, such tribalism seemed to lead Republican-leaning areas to discount early warnings of the pandemic, eschewing the necessary measures for limiting its spread. Seemingly cutting-edge algorithms have proven to be plagued by age-old racial, gender, and social biases.

Digital platforms are also fueling political polarization and a deterioration of public discourse. Illiberal and autocratic regimes have harnessed new technologies to undermine democratic institutions and elections, and to stifle speech and political activity. This trend, too, has been accelerated by the pandemic, not least in Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has exploited the crisis to gain near-absolute power indefinitely. Likewise, in the economic sphere, inequality is widening alongside the emergence of new global monopolies, and the pandemic has cast the real-world effects of current disparities of income and wealth into sharp relief.

These developments require unconventional approaches to governance. One silver lining of the pandemic is that it has created space for new ideas, with even longstanding champions of the *status quo* now advocating for hitherto radical policies such as universal basic income.

The Bretton Woods analogy is not perfect, and the five agenda items described here are neither sufficient nor exhaustive. Unlike in the post-war period, today's world has no clear victor, consensus on political economy, or strong global yearning for peace and stability after decades of turmoil. Nonetheless, as in that period, there is a clear disconnect between the nature and scale of our challenges and the design and capacity of the existing global-governance regime.

As we emerge from another shock to our global system and barrel down a new path of economic, social, and technological change, we urgently need to update our governance model. As with the post-war industrial economy, we need a Bretton Woods-type model that mitigates the negative implications of the digital revolution and ushers in a new era of shared prosperity and public health.

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DECOUPLING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Absent multilateral cooperation, the global digital economy could splinter, and everyone would pay

Daniel Garcia-Macia and Rishi Goyal

Technology wars are becoming the new trade wars.

In the race to dominate the technologies of the future, the competition between the United States and China has led to import and export bans of 5G network technologies, semiconductors, social media platforms, and data-based security applications across multiple countries. Countries are also imposing restrictions on financial market access for foreign tech firms deemed to be security risks. Trade liberalization in digital services is giving way to increased restrictions (see chart).

From a classical economic perspective, this escalation makes little sense. In traditional sectors, barriers to trade generally lower economic well-being in all countries involved, as they prevent efficient specialization and limit the variety of goods available.

In the digital era, however, leadership in emerging technologies bestows outsized profits, global market shares, and the ability to set standards. New services built on data, such as artificial intelligence, next generation 5G networks and the internet of

things, and quantum computing have opened the way for new growth engines that promise to transform entire industries and lift productivity. This trend toward an increasingly digitalized and networked world has only been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

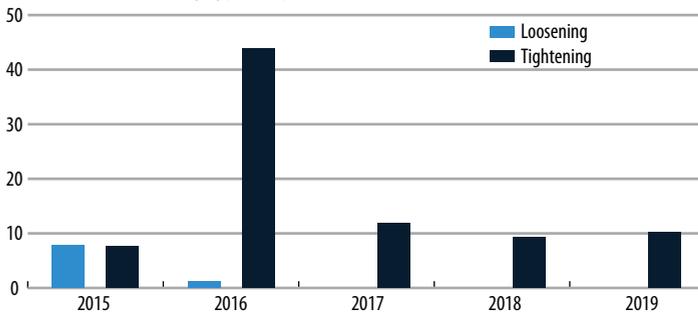
With a winner-takes-most dynamic—rooted in economies of scale and scope—global technological leadership is highly prized. The IMF *World Economic Outlook* has shown that a small fraction of highly productive and innovative firms has gained dominance and enjoyed large profits over the past two decades (IMF 2019). The phenomenon spans sectors and economies but is particularly acute in the digital sector.

However, the race for leadership in digital technologies does not conform to traditional borders and intellectual property protections. The networked economy makes it possible to reach seamlessly across the world to collect information and make decisions, enhancing economic efficiency. But it also can allow thieves, saboteurs, and spies

A digital trade wall

Trade restrictive measures on digital services have replaced trade liberalization in recent years.

(GDP share of countries changing policies, percent)



Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and authors' calculations.

Note: The sample comprises OECD countries and eight large non-OECD countries.

to reach back to steal, copy, manipulate, or destroy. Digitalization and connectivity have sped up the diffusion of knowledge while simultaneously bringing new security threats.

Toward a new tech order

Macroeconomists in general have treated security matters as largely distinct from economic matters, except where conflict and crime dominate. For the most part, they have taken the institutional underpinnings for safeguarding property rights and military matters as separate from the analysis of economic policy. But in cyberspace, there are no such distinctions; no effective domestic norms or public institutions for enforcing security, such as “e-police” or an “e-justice system”; and no international mechanisms for de-escalation and maintaining peace.

The interconnections of the digital era blur traditional distinctions between economic and security issues. Simultaneously engines of economic growth and channels of security risks, they link and incentivize the use of economic policy tools, such as trade and industrial policies, for broader security or geopolitical gains.

Thus, we are confronted with a new set of questions. When, if ever, does restricting digital trade make sense for an individual country? How does this affect other countries, and how should they respond? What policies and institutions can deter conflict?

In a recent IMF staff working paper, we show that some of the standard answers no longer apply in the digital era (Garcia-Macia and Goyal 2020). Once the key features of digital sectors are considered—large market power driven by scale economies, technology flows, and security risks—import and export bans can be rationalized from the point of view of an individual country. However, these bans come at a deleterious cost for the rest of the world.

In our analysis, the key motivation for banning technology imports—if a country hosts a potentially viable supplier—is to repatriate monopoly profits that would otherwise accrue to foreign firms. The presence of cybersecurity vulnerabilities only increases the attraction of banning imports of foreign technology. However, banning imports could halt inflows of technological knowledge and may be desirable only for a country with sufficiently advanced technological capacity and know-how. This is not an entirely new result. Trade economists have long pointed out that banning imports may be beneficial in monopolistic sectors.

More striking and novel is the finding that banning *exports* can also be beneficial for an individual country in the digital economy. The explanation lies in the dynamics of technological competition between countries. A challenger country can successfully displace a leader as the global producer and capture monopoly rents, as a result of international technology diffusion and domestic scale economies. To forestall such an outcome and reduce the associated cybersecurity vulnerabilities, the leader in a certain technology may seek to ban its exports.

Imposing trade bans could lead to retaliation. An import ban might help a technological power gain an advantage in global markets, although a competitor might also reciprocate the ban, leading to a worse outcome for both countries. In many cases, the anticipation of such reciprocity can act as a powerful deterrent.

Unlike import bans, export bans cannot be deterred with retaliation via trade policies. A technology leader would impose them irrespective of the challenger’s response. Hence, they could be harder to defuse in a world of decentralized international competition.

Cooperation as a cure

These findings are sobering. Trade bans may benefit an individual country relative to the free trade outcome. But they cut off other countries from access to digital technologies or lead to inefficient decoupling into separate economic spheres. Costs are amplified when allies follow suit. Leading countries should be urged to set up cooperative frameworks in several areas.

Securing intellectual property rights across borders should be a priority. Minimum enforced

standards would be in everyone's interest. They would reduce concerns about misuse, forced transfers, or theft and thus diminish the incentives for a technological leader to impose export bans, allowing for longer periods of diffusion and higher global welfare. Steps toward defining global standards should start with fostering cooperation in specific areas. An example is the international standard for electronic data interchange among financial institutions that facilitates payments.

Clear, transparent, and uniform rules may also be needed on the interaction between the public and the private sectors. Governments' partnerships with domestic cyber technology firms for purportedly national security purposes, including surveillance, should be clearly ring-fenced.

A related area is cybersecurity. The advent of the internet has facilitated an explosion in cross-border online crime, for which the national and international tools, norms, and organizations have yet to be firmly established. Efforts to cooperate on cybersecurity have been stymied by competing interests among participants, national security considerations, differences in judicial and criminal systems, and concerns over misuse by governments.

Facilitating foreign ownership and control of monopolistic digital goods firms would also broaden the sharing of rents, align incentives for better global outcomes, and discourage trade conflict. Open financial or capital accounts to permit such ownership, governance arrangements to facilitate control, upholding foreign property rights, and narrowly circumscribing areas subject to national security arguments would be prerequisites.

Regarding regulatory policy, if consideration is given to breaking up large domestic technology firms to reduce their monopoly profits or otherwise regulating prices, this ideally should be done in concert across nations. The absence of a concerted effort could reduce the incentives for any country to pursue action in this area. If only one country or region moves toward strong regulation while foreign monopolists are free to compete, that area could risk falling behind in the race for technology and markets.

Coordinated initiatives to introduce digital taxation would similarly be much more effective and perceived to be fairer. Tech giants benefit from selling goods and services online across borders with limited physical presence and facing little income tax liability in the buyer's jurisdiction

under existing international tax arrangements. This favors tax arbitrage and creates an uneven playing field.

A new Bretton Woods moment

The challenge of international cooperation against a backdrop of mistrust and competition has led to calls for a new Bretton Woods moment for the digital age. Just as Bretton Woods brought nations toward a new monetary order in the wake of two world wars, rampant protectionism, and the Great Depression, international cooperation on digital matters could similarly seek consensus on broad principles and common institutions to resolve problems, such as in the areas outlined above, and help create a predictable and open framework for international trade.

Another concrete proposal would be to establish a digital stability board—in the image of the Financial Stability Board—to develop common standards, regulations, and policies; share best practices; and monitor risks (Medhora 2021). This could help protect financial stability from cyberattacks and bring about progress in areas such as a charter of technological rights, uniform statistics for the digital economy, and international data trusts to collect and guard individuals' data for designated purposes, such as health research.

If, as is expected, the monopoly rents on offer remain large and cyber warfare is seen as the key arena for security conflicts in the future, there will be strong domestic resistance to collaboration. In this case, continued tech conflict, with the risk of a global rupture and its associated adverse spillovers, looms large. Collaboration would weaken the incentives for conflict and lead to potentially better outcomes. But it will require sustained effort and rebuilding trust. **FD**

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The Real-Life Risks of Our Digital World

By [Robert Muggah](#), a principal at the SecDev Group and co-founder of the Igarapé Institute

JULY 10, 2021

Our reliance on data and devices has made us extremely vulnerable. The first step is knowing where everything is.

If we didn't know already, the COVID-19 pandemic has driven home the fact that data is the most important strategic asset of the 21st century. Never has the world depended more on digital data flows as when millions of workers and students switched to remote access and when online retail took the place of shuttered stores. As much as our digital interconnectedness is powering innovation, commerce, and interaction, it is also generating new risks and vulnerabilities. This is because the digital systems on which we all depend—the internet, cloud computing, 5G telecommunications infrastructure—are insecure by design, poorly regulated, prone to abuse, and vulnerable to attack. With billions of new devices and hundreds of millions of people newly connected each year, the so-called attack surface—the myriad ways in which we are exposed via connected devices and ubiquitous services—is expanding exponentially.

Understanding the geography of digitalization, including systemic vulnerabilities across public and private networks and dangerous weaknesses in supply chains, is more important than ever. Doing a better job to map the globe's ever more pervasive digital networks—the satellites, submarine cables, and cell towers that distribute data and connect people and things to each other—can help identify systemic risks and ways to mitigate them. Our digital footprint in the physical world—from the rare-earth elements that power our electronic devices to the infrastructure that directs each bit and byte—leaves a cartographic impression that can be tracked and mapped on a highly granular scale.

Rare Earths

It is easy to forget that the basis of our digital world is physical. The fiber-optic cables, batteries, circuits, and devices that drive digitalization are constituted of minerals. Copper, quartz, silicone, cobalt, lithium, and the rare-earth elements—a family of 17 metals—are used in virtually every electronic device on the planet. Yet most rare-earth production takes place in China, which controls well over 80 percent of the global supply, followed by the United States, Myanmar, and Australia. Against a backdrop of rising demand for these elements, China is trying to secure its dominance over the global supply chain, while other countries are increasingly recycling electronic waste and extracting base materials to reduce their dependence on others. Rising tensions with China have propelled efforts by the United States to shake-up China's near-monopoly in rare earths and strengthen self-reliance.

Rare Earth Bottlenecks

Rare earth elements consist of 17 silvery-white heavy metals often found together. In the 1950s, global production was concentrated in Brazil, India, and South Africa. Today, China produces over 80 percent of the global supply. There are close to 800 reported rare earth mines and deposits, with most production occurring in places like Inner Mongolia and Western Australia.

The risk of supply chain disruptions, including in the mining, processing, and shipping of rare earths, is very real. For example, China has imposed restrictions on its supplies in the past, including to Japan, which drove up global prices for a range of manufactured technologies. Japan has since expanded its strategic stockpile. Hacking and ransomware threats to production and processing facilities are also rising. Meanwhile, the mining of rare earths is wreaking ecological havoc. While rare earths are actually quite abundant, their extraction and separation are expensive and environmentally destructive. China has steadily expanded production both at home and in Africa, where it is less encumbered by environmental and labor regulations. Chinese-run mines have generated massive leaching pools of ammonium sulfate and ammonium chloride, contaminating water supplies and cropland.

Satellites

Many of the systems powering the planet's digital networks are not on Earth but in space. The first satellites were launched in the 1950s, and today there are over 6,000 of them orbiting the planet, of which more than 2,600 are operational. Some of them generate information on the weather or the Earth's surface, while more than 1,000 communication satellites facilitate internet, cellular, television, and radio access. A host of satellite constellations in low Earth orbit are offering low-latency internet access from space.

Threats against satellites from nation-states, including the intentional disruption of their signals, are hardly new. Yet there are growing concerns about the expansion of ground- and space-based capacities to spoof, jam, damage, and destroy satellite systems. China, Russia, and the United States are all moving rapidly toward the weaponization of space, mostly with the argument of deterring threats from rivals. Russia and China have tested several satellite-destroying systems—both ground-to-space ones and space-based ones known as “killer satellites.” Satellites are also surprisingly vulnerable to hacking. Meanwhile, satellite images are increasingly exposed to generative adversarial networks that manipulate remote sensing images. Deepfakes, extremely convincing false images and videos, are now a problem in outer space, too.

Undersea Cables

Digital infrastructure isn't expanding just in the heavens above but also in the seas below. There are over 420 submarine cables transporting around 95 percent of cross-border data and voice traffic. The

first undersea cable was laid in 1858 from Ireland to Canada, allowing users to share a few words an hour. By 1900, there were over 130,000 miles of cable stretching around the world. Fiber optics only appeared in 1988, and today there are more than 700,000 miles of cable transmitting close to 160 terabits per second. With the voracious data transmission needs of cloud computing, large tech companies are driving most new investment in submarine cables. Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft alone have invested over \$20 billion in new cables over the past few years. One of Google's latest, a submarine cable linking Europe and the United States called Dunant (named after Henry Dunant, the Swiss founder of the Red Cross and first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize), can transmit a record-breaking 250 terabits per second.

Vulnerable Submarine Cables

There are at least 426 submarine cables in operation around the world transporting around 95 percent of cross-border data and voice traffic. Their total length is an estimated 1.3 million kilometers, ranging from the 130-kilometer CeltixConnect cable linking Britain and Ireland to the 20,000 kilometer Asia America Gateway cable.

The strategic importance of undersea cables and the operating stations connecting them to terrestrial networks cannot be overstated. They are one of several battlefronts in the ongoing information wars. They can be tapped to gain intelligence, snipped to slow communications, or implanted with backdoors to siphon raw data. China, Russia, and the United States each have the capability to sabotage cables with specially designed spy submarines, for example, a strategic vulnerability that is widely acknowledged among defense experts. There are very few manufacturers with the ability to lay such cables. Huawei Marine Networks, until recently a subsidiary of the Chinese telecommunications giant, has built or repaired almost a quarter of the world's cables.

Vulnerable Networks

Cellphone towers are the nervous system of the digital world. They are also ubiquitous. Groups like OpenCellID have located over 36 million unique GSM cell towers globally. Typically located in highly populated areas, these towers primarily receive and transmit voice and data from and to cellphones and other devices. Some are camouflaged as flagpoles, while others are mounted on buildings. Their density varies: 3G and 4G towers can be spaced between 30 and 90 miles apart, while 5G towers are often clustered more closely together, with distances varying between 800 and 1,000 feet.

Proliferating Cell Towers

Despite our overwhelming reliance on them, cellular networks are virtually impossible to protect from hacking, and few carriers have the practical means to defend themselves. Most data traffic is unencrypted, and the systems that power the networks are unable to distinguish between legitimate and malicious commands. This is because the underlying protocol for most systems is outdated, which means systems can be easily breached. (The black market is rife with offers.) There are also devices

that can simulate cell towers—known as IMSI catchers or Stingrays—that can ensnare unsuspecting users by intercepting or eavesdropping on calls.

Data Centers

These are the nodes that power communications around the world. First appearing during the 1940s, they are now critical to sustaining public and private cloud platforms, including those of Alibaba, Amazon, Facebook, Google, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, and Twitter. A data center is essentially a dedicated space to house computer systems, including for telecommunications and data storage, much of it redundant. A large center can use as much electricity as a decent-sized city. Since the start of the internet boom in the late 1990s, data centers have exploded in number, as have their scale and environmental impact—including about 1 percent of global electricity use.

Today, there are millions of data centers around the world, including more than 540 hyperscale centers with tens of thousands of computer racks. Range International Information Group in Langfang, China, is reportedly home to the largest center, spanning over 6.3 million square feet. The vast majority are in the United States, followed by China, Japan, and parts of Western Europe. Hackers are increasingly targeting data centers to hijack systems, pilfer accounts, and steal industrial secrets. One reason data centers are getting hacked is because they are often easy targets due to the fact that they are often poorly defended against digital malfeasance, the persistence of legacy systems that are easily breached, and the growing sophistication of cyber arsenals.

Connected Societies

The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying lockdowns accelerated the dependence of governments, businesses, and entire societies on digital technologies. Countries, states, and cities with adequate mobile networks, decent broadband, and digitally literate populations tended to fare better than those without them. Some societies are more digitally connected than others: There are still more than 3.7 billion people without basic internet access. In the developed world, over 87 percent of the population has direct access to the internet compared to just 47 percent in developing countries and 19 percent in the least developed nations.

In a digitally interdependent world, the ability to access telehealth, take classes online, or work remotely is not just critical to thrive but to survive. People who do not have robust broadband access are being left behind. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, over 60 percent of the population still lacks access to 4G networks, with 2G the norm in rural areas. Ensuring affordable digital services for education, work, and health that are safe and resilient will be fundamental to weather crises, including future pandemics.

Wired World

There are more than 4.6 billion active internet users today, up from roughly 4 billion in 2019. That means that around 60 percent of the world is connected to at least one device—and some of them to many more. According to industry experts, at least 93 million new phone users, 316 million new internet users, and 490 million new social media users went online between January 2020 and January 2021. Yet waves of hacking and malware attacks are a constant reminder that most governments, companies, and citizens are digitally exposed. The ransomware epidemic, alongside the colossal Solar Winds and Kaseya supply chain attacks, is not just threatening public infrastructure, government services, and financial institutions, but also the basic trust needed to sustain the digital economy.

The exposure of internet users to digital malfeasance involving their physical devices is far-reaching. In recent years, cyber-security researchers have detected compromises in over 100 million smart devices around the world. These kinds of gaps can expose corporate servers and IT systems, medical and financial data, and the control systems of factories and utilities. As the world rapidly moves toward the Internet of Things, where everything around us is always connected, these risks have only grown more serious. By 2025, there will be more than 32 billion wirelessly connected devices (up from 14 billion in 2021), most of them lacking even basic security features.

One way to more safely navigate a rapidly digitalizing world is by mapping it out in a way that is actionable—and quantifying what’s at risk. By illuminating the interdependencies and vulnerabilities across physical and digital infrastructures and supply chains, maps can help governments, businesses, and civil societies bolster their defenses. In a world where digital devices are easily infiltrated, manipulated, and weaponized, awareness is essential. It is only by better understanding the risk that we can more readily reduce it.

Security

Urgent Need for Internet Cooperation

May 24, 2022

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He Yafei

Former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs



In this era of globalization, the development of cyber information technology is boosting the progress and economic prosperity of human society, and a Fourth Industrial Revolution — a scientific and technological upgrade — are in full swing. Countries in the current information age face many risks and challenges for political stability, economic development and social harmony.

With the continuous innovation and integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, the internet of things, smart manufacturing and big data, cyberspace and physical space are highly integrated and geopolitical traditional security threats and non-traditional cyber threats are interwoven, presenting a threat to people's sense of security.

and others, especially financial sanctions, highlight the important role of cyberspace and information technology.

The global governance system has been overwhelmed by the impact of geopolitics and rampant biological viruses, and it is urgent to take the UN Charter as purpose and principle, with international law as the basis to change the global internet governance system to make a multilateral, democratic and transparent system and jointly build a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace.

China has an important role to play in establishing a global internet governance system.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and with its extensive cyber presence and successful domestic internet governance experience, China should actively help build a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace and foster a multilateral, democratic and transparent global internet governance system.

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "Without cybersecurity we cannot ensure national security." He proposed "the shared human values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom" and advocated true multilateralism for dealing with global affairs and global challenges.

In terms of cyberspace order and governance practices, China is a global leader in the scale of information infrastructure construction, and its cyberspace governance capacity keeps improving. As of December last year, the number of Chinese internet users had surpassed 1.03 billion, and more than 1.42 million 5G base stations had been built.

As its information technology innovation capacity and digital economy development vitality has continued to improve, China's global innovation index ranking jumped to 14th, and value-added core industries in the digital economy reached 7.8 percent of GDP. The effectiveness of digital government services improved significantly, and the global ranking on the e-government development index rose to 45th. China has formed a systematic concept of cyberspace governance and promulgated a series of laws and regulations.

Complex global situation

As the international pattern of global cyberspace, rule-making and order establishment suggest, anarchy, disorder and lack of rules are the norm, and the cybersecurity situation is serious and complex, with increasing risks.

First, at the upper end of the power structure in cyberspace, with a virtual IT monopoly and dominance of network discourse, and for reasons of ideology and strategic competition, the United States and other Western countries have adopted repressive policies against China and other emerging economies, and have never stopped their cyberattacks against China.

and is an important channel for western parties to participate, take a stand and exert pressure.

Second, those responsible for global cyberspace governance are increasingly diverse, with governments, enterprises, NGOs, industry associations and individuals as stakeholders. In the early stage of the formation of cyberspace, rule-making and management were mainly the concern of network service providers. With the integration of cyberspace and physical space, cybersecurity has become an important part of national security.

As government involvement and management has deepened, the government has come to dominate cyberspace. However, cyberspace operations still rely on service providers, especially large high-tech companies, which participate in economic, communication and social activities within a country and globally through massive data resources. The spread of information technology has lowered the technological threshold and made raw materials readily available. While providing convenience and well-being for the population, information technology has also increased cybersecurity risks such as terrorism, public opinion crises, cybercrime and the proliferation of cryptocurrencies.

Third, cyberspace covers a wide range of fields. IT, big data, industrial policy, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence are all closely related to the political, economic, military and communication capabilities of most countries. If cyberspace anarchy and disorder continue, it will not only make cooperation in the international community difficult but will also allow political, economic and military conflicts to snowball.

Achieving a shared future

The international community has made attempts to establish a cyberspace order and corresponding rules, and it has seen some results. However, in the end, it is difficult to establish a global cyberspace governance system and a new cyberspace order due to geopolitical competition among major powers, the wide coverage of cyberspace, the large number of participants, the difficulty in tracing the source of cyberattacks and the lack of effective enforcement and monitoring mechanisms.

It is urgent, therefore, for the international community to recognize the reality and risks of the lack of global cyberspace governance. The following actions should be considered:

First, with the common values of all humanity as a guide, it is necessary to uphold genuine multilateralism, avoid geopolitical interference, overcome ideological bias, strengthen consultation and coordination among major powers and actively promote cyberspace rule-making and the construction of a global governance system and order in cyberspace.

Global cyberspace governance relies on the cooperation and consensus of major powers. Cooperation with the United Nations, G20, APEC, ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3 and other international,

establishment of rules and standards for cyberspace governance in many areas such as strategy, technology, security and society.

China and the United States should strengthen communication in cyberspace, enhance understanding and cooperation through dialogue, and strengthen conflict prevention and crisis control in cyberspace. Currently, the two countries have an increasing need for cooperation in cyber governance, combating cybercrime, and promoting the digital economy.

Second, international institutions, with the United Nations at the core, should play a role as both platform and bridge. It is necessary to strive to establish new platforms that are inclusive, balanced and non-ideological at the global, regional, subregional and professional levels. When cyberspace rules are made, it is imperative to form and solidify the framework and rules that have been agreed upon, taking into account the new situation and new characteristics of cyberspace and information technology. This should serve as the foundation for a binding, enforceable and monitored international treaty on cyberspace.

In 2020, China proposed the Global Data Security Initiative, emphasizing that countries should enhance communication and build mutual trust in digital governance. The initiative has won widespread support in the international community, and the intent to cooperate has emerged with Arab countries and Russia. In the future, the initiative can be made more specific and a feasible data security guarantee mechanism can be formed to promote the establishment of global rules for digital governance.

Third, non-state actors, especially high-tech enterprises, have become important participants in cyberspace and its governance. The COVID-19 epidemic continues to this day and has profoundly changed people's lifestyles and production methods. While government dominance in cyberspace is on the increase, non-state and non-governmental actors, such as high-tech companies, NGOs and even individuals, have become deeply involved in the economic, political, cultural and daily lives of people in all countries.

High-tech companies, which have advanced information technology and massive amounts of data, have had immeasurable influence in cyberspace, so their participation in global cyberspace governance, including their role in setting rules and technical standards for cyberspace, cannot be underestimated. The number of internet users in each country is huge, and they also play an important role in the formulation of cyberspace rules.

Fourth, building a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace and establishing a multilateral, democratic and transparent global internet governance system requires new ideas, new concepts and new approaches. In this regard, relevant NGOs and think tanks can play an important role. The participation of NGOs and think tanks in global cybergovernance and rule-making can help create systematic theories of governance, which in turn can provide theoretical support for global cyberspace governance and order.

threaten human survival, especially the definition of cyberattacks that constitute acts of war in cybersecurity. At present, different countries have different interpretations of this, and it is urgent for countries to conduct dialogues and negotiations to reach a consensus and prevent accidents and black swan and gray rhinoceros events in cyberspace, which could evolve into a global crisis.

The current complex and dangerous cyberspace reality and governance deficit require the concerted efforts and common response of all countries, international organizations, enterprises, individuals and other cyberspace participants. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and having an extensive cyber presence, China will take active steps and advocate managing differences while seeking common ground that sees a common future characterized by equality and respect. China will strengthen communication and cooperation with other countries; explore new ideas, concepts and models of cyberspace governance; and work with other countries to build a cyberspace community with a shared future.

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Russia's efforts to promote cyber norms that serve its interests gain traction in Africa

By: Cayley Clifford

25 Aug 2021

A proposal by Russia that the United Nations should consider a global cybercrime treaty has been adopted with the support of 30 African countries, raising concerns that Moscow's known preference for state cyber sovereignty will prevail in ways that give countries regulatory freedom to stifle political opposition or citizen dissent.

Early in July 2021, cyber attacks originating from Russia prompted US President Joe Biden to call for action from Moscow. This, [Biden said](#), was conveyed to Russian President Vladimir Putin during an hour-long phone call. While the Kremlin denies the US even contacted Moscow about the attacks, recent events have promoted debate around the responsibility of state actors, including Russia, in cyberspace.

That country's attempts to promote or resist norms around traditional global governance areas are well documented. It is known to offer a more conservative approach towards issues of human rights and military intervention, for example. And now it is under scrutiny in newer areas of contestation, including cyber governance and cyber security.

Over the past five years, Russia has become an active promoter of cyber governance norms. As it continues to push its cyber proposals on the international stage, where does Africa stand? Do growing relations between Africa and Russia mean they always share the same stance?

'Splinternet' or global infrastructure?

Moscow's cyber norm promotion is closely linked to its national interests. Russia seeks to reclaim its stature as a global power (including in the technology landscape), but is also interested in how cyberspace can be harnessed for domestic purposes.

In deciding whether the internet should remain a global infrastructure or become a "splinternet" (controlled nationally), Russia and China are proponents of cyber sovereignty. They argue that countries should manage their own cyberspace and that the internet should be bordered and thus restricted.

This has led to a [range of concerns](#) around internet freedoms, from the censorship of political content online to large-scale internet shutdowns (a practice that has gained traction in some parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, especially around elections or public protests). While traditionally opposed by the US and other democracies, the ability to confront cyber threats, conduct surveillance and enforce regulations on harmful content such as child pornography and terrorist propaganda, means the idea of cyber sovereignty is gaining ground in the Western world too.

In promoting this cyber norm, Russia seeks to pull as many countries as possible into its orbit to enhance its soft power capabilities. At the UN in 2018, a Russian-proposed working group, open to all UN member states, garnered the [support of 109 countries](#). Many of these countries were African, demonstrating international interest in discussing cyber norms in terms favourable to Russia.

Of the working group's initiatives, capacity-building efforts to enhance countries' abilities to protect their ICT environment may particularly appeal to African states who perceive themselves as lagging. Indeed, the

rise in cybercrime — with critical national services often affected — has seen cyber security become an issue of international concern.

African support for Russian cybercrime resolutions

Russia is a major supporter (and sponsor) of several international cybercrime resolutions at the UN. In December 2018, a Russia-backed resolution that required the UN Secretary-General to collect countries' views about cybercrime was adopted by a majority vote. Of the 88 countries that voted in favour, [32 were African](#). Only four African countries — Botswana, Ghana, Morocco and South Africa — submitted their views, but all four listed [lack of state capacity](#) and lack of international consensus as major challenges in combating cybercrime. These and other views were summarised into a report for consideration by the General Assembly.

Moving the ball forward once more, in December 2019, Russia succeeded in pushing through a UN General Assembly [resolution](#) that aimed to create a negotiating platform, under UN auspices, for the consideration of a new cybercrime treaty. This move was strongly opposed by the US which expressed concerns that this resolution would stifle existing global anti-cybercrime efforts. But with [79 votes in favour, including 30 from Africa](#), the resolution was adopted. Officers were elected to the ad hoc committee in May 2021 and it has been agreed that six negotiating sessions will take place before the possible adoption of a treaty.

One of the major concerns with Russia's resolution is its vagueness around the definition of cybercrime. Not only could this lead to legal uncertainty among countries, but could perhaps provide Russia with the regulatory room it needs to stifle political opposition or citizen dissent. A month before Russia's UN resolution was passed, [amendments to domestic legislation](#) allowing the government to block internet traffic from outside Russia came into force. Human Rights Watch [said](#) the laws undermined freedom of expression and privacy.

Cyberspace: the new battleground for competing norms

How do Africa's own cybercrime initiatives compare with Russia's international efforts?

“A global governance system will be important,” Tomiwa Ilori, researcher at the University of Pretoria's Expression, Information and Digital Rights Unit, told SAIIA. But African countries need to be wary of external influence, he said. “When deciding on a framework, a human rights-based approach should be used.”

An African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection was adopted in 2014, but has yet to meet the [minimum number of ratifications](#) required for it to come into force. The convention references the need for regulatory frameworks to respect the rights of citizens, but it does not establish a framework for all member states. Instead, it encourages signatories to draft their own legal, policy and regulatory measures to manage cybercrime.

Almost [40 African countries](#) have introduced legislation that deals with cybercrime. Some of the laws, like Russia's UN resolution, are vaguely worded while others are similar to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation — an earlier attempt to establish uniform cyberspace policies across countries.

This tells us that as a continent of 54 states, African views on cyber governance are not homogenous. And while many share a preference for cyber sovereignty, particularly as a means to quash political dissent, African countries do have some level of agency when it comes to adopting a model. With cyberspace fast becoming the new battleground for competing norms and influence, there is also a role for civil society in Africa to continue advocating for cyber freedoms.

Digital currencies: Economic and geopolitical challenges

By: [Stewart Fleming](#) and [Stephen Pickford](#)

29 JANUARY 2021

Digital cryptocurrencies are rising up the financial policy agenda as tech innovators seek to capitalize on their technological expertise and data from billions of users.

The governments of the G7 are well aware of the benefits of digital financial technology, but are also hugely concerned about the public policy and geopolitical threats from this potentially disruptive innovation, especially from so-called ‘global stablecoins’ (GSCs) operated by loosely regulated, non-financial technology giants, but denominated in national currencies.

A [recent G7 report](#) warns such innovations raise serious questions about a range of public policy issues, including ‘challenges to fair competition, financial stability, monetary policy and, in the extreme, the international monetary system’. G7 ministers and governors have [stated quite explicitly](#) that no global stablecoins should begin operation until regulatory and oversight issues are resolved.

These governments have recognised the need for international cooperation on how private digital currencies should be regulated, not least because the alternative – a global free-for-all – could be chaotic and dangerous.

However, they also see that well-regulated digital currencies can provide significant public benefits in greater efficiency and lower costs for both domestic and, in particular, international payments systems, and help ensure financial services reach the hundreds of millions of people – especially in developing countries – without bank accounts.

China has so far been well-advanced in its public sector response, launching domestic trials of a government-backed digital renminbi (RMB) in 2020 and also beginning to clamp down on Ant Group, the country’s biggest finance-focused hi-tech company. Many other major governments and central banks, [notably the European Central Bank](#), are now considering whether and how to follow China by launching official digital currencies.

They are also aware these are decisions with important implications for the wider international financial system, such as the future role of the dollar and other reserve currencies, and their part in supporting international trade and finance.

What are digital currencies?

Digital ‘crypto-currencies’ and ‘crypto-assets’ aim to mirror some, or all, of the uses of traditional money – a means of payment, a store of value, and a unit of account.

The terms used to describe them are often confusing and misleading, covering a wide range of financial instruments with different technical, legal, and practical characteristics. They range from decentralized digital tokens such as Bitcoin at one end of the spectrum to official, sovereign-backed, central bank digital currencies at the other.

Bitcoins and their many look-alikes, often known as ‘crypto-assets’, are best viewed as a volatile, speculative asset class, which some users are prepared to accept as a form of payment.

Partly because their security relies on a combination of cryptographic and decentralized ‘blockchain’ technology which protects the identity of holders, governments are deeply concerned about their use in illicit activities such as money laundering, terrorist financing and tax evasion.

The form of digital currency which has attracted most interest, both from companies examining whether to launch a digital token and from governments insisting on the need to regulate them, are ‘[stablecoins](#)’, particularly global stablecoins such as [Facebook’s proposed global currency](#) previously known as Libra, now rebranded as Diem.

Why do central banks want their own digital currencies?

One stated reason is the efficiencies in payment systems which could result, but the reality is their motivations vary and go well beyond the efficiency argument.

In the case of China, a digital RMB could promote RMB internationalization and help curb the dominant role of the dollar in international trade and finance. This could help limit China’s exposure to US sanctions policies which rely heavily on the dollar’s pre-eminent position in international finance.

Sanctions are also a motivator for the European Union (EU) since the Donald Trump US administration imposed secondary sanctions on some EU companies.

The [European Commission argues](#) that in order to achieve ‘strategic autonomy’ the EU should aim to ‘improve the implementation and enforcement of EU sanctions regimes and increase the EU’s resilience to the effects of unlawful extra-territorial sanctions ... by third countries’. A digital euro could further this goal, as well as boost the international role of the euro.

European banks are also [making it clear](#) they want their governments to ensure the EU is not left behind in any race to develop both private and public sector digital currencies and tokens, so they can capitalize on the resulting efficiencies.

They face potentially powerful new ‘tech giant’ competitors – such as Facebook – unconstrained at present by banking regulation, with superior technology, a [potential global customer base of billions](#), and proven capacity to scale up the business at speed. Tech giants have the capacity to move ahead quickly if allowed.

How will digital currencies affect geopolitics?

The expansion of big tech firms into global finance is still in its infancy. But, as these giants expand and banks themselves widen their digital footprints, financial technology will reshape not just the commercial but also the geopolitical sphere.

Former UK national security adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant [recently warned of the Chinese financial threat](#) from a digital RMB, writing that the introduction of a ‘digital yuan’ would give China the ‘ability to bypass the world’s traditional banking systems and then challenge the dollar’s pre-eminent position’.

In 2019, then Bank of England governor Mark Carney [spoke of the 'destabilizing asymmetry'](#) of the international monetary system, lamenting the 'domineering influence' of the dollar and indicating an active discussion is well underway about the potential impact of digital currencies on global politics.

Carney identified the RMB as the most likely candidate to join the dollar as a 'true reserve currency', noting the RMB is making significant progress as a medium of exchange particularly in trade and finance. He said his view was that technology could play a role in facilitating the emergence of a new global reserve currency - and a digital RMB could be one step in that process.

Are we heading towards currency cooperation or confrontation?

The widespread introduction of digital currencies has the potential to transform the world financial system. In January 2020, a group of advanced economy central banks – from Canada, the UK, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the European Central Bank – announced they were [working together on central bank digital currencies](#) under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The US Federal Reserve Board has since joined too but China, despite launching trials of a domestic digital RMB, appears not to be part of the group. Certainly the looming geopolitical challenge from China is a motivation for others – especially G7 economies – to cooperate.

But cooperative agreements among these central banks could also play a pivotal role in shaping not just international standards for sovereign digital currencies, but also for the regulation and supervision of a more deeply digitized global financial system. And the chances of this advanced economy group of central banks working together are enhanced by the arrival of President Joe Biden in the White House.

As China takes forward its own plans for a digital currency with a financial system boasting some of the largest 'fintech' firms in the world, this is a threat to US leadership in digital finance and the dollar's role at the centre of the international monetary system.

Given the globally-integrated nature of finance today, the US would protect its own interests best by cooperating with other like-minded governments to shape the overall design of digital finance together, rather than focus on a dogged defence of the dollar's traditional position.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The End of Cyber-Anarchy?

How to Build a New Digital Order

BY JOSEPH S. NYE, JR.
January/February 2022

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Ransomware attacks, election interference, corporate espionage, threats to the electric grid: based on the drumbeat of current headlines, there seems to be little hope of bringing a measure of order to the anarchy of cyberspace. The relentless bad news stories paint a picture of an ungoverned online world that is growing more dangerous by the day—with grim implications not just for cyberspace itself but also for economies, geopolitics, democratic societies, and basic questions of war and peace.

Given this distressing reality, any suggestion that it is possible to craft rules of the road in cyberspace tends to be met with skepticism: core attributes of cyberspace, the thinking goes, make it all but impossible to enforce any norms or even to know whether they are being violated in the first place. States that declare their support for cybernorms simultaneously conduct large-scale cyber-operations against their adversaries. In December 2015, for example, the UN General Assembly for the first time endorsed a set of 11

voluntary, nonbinding international cybernorms. Russia had helped craft these norms and later signed off on their publication. That same month, it conducted a cyberattack against Ukraine's power grid, leaving roughly 225,000 people without electricity for several hours, and was also ramping up its efforts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. For skeptics, this served as yet further evidence that establishing norms for responsible state behavior in cyberspace is a pipe dream.

Yet that skepticism reveals a misunderstanding about how norms work and are strengthened over time. Violations, if not addressed, can weaken norms, but they do not render them irrelevant. Norms create expectations about behavior that make it possible to hold other states accountable. Norms also help legitimize official actions and help states recruit allies when they decide to respond to a violation. And norms don't appear suddenly or start working overnight. History shows that societies take time to learn how to respond to major disruptive technological changes and to put in place rules that make the world safer from new dangers. It took two decades after the United States dropped nuclear bombs on Japan for countries to reach agreement on the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Although cybertechnology presents unique challenges, international norms to govern its use appear to be developing in the usual way: slowly but steadily, over the course of decades. As they take hold, such norms will be increasingly critical to reducing the risk that cybertechnology advances could pose to the international order, especially if Washington and its allies and partners reinforce those norms with other methods of deterrence.

Although some analysts argue that deterrence does not work in cyberspace, that conclusion is simplistic: it works in different ways than in the nuclear domain. And alternative strategies have proved equally or more deficient. As targets continue to proliferate, the United States must pursue a strategy that

combines deterrence and diplomacy to strengthen the guardrails in this new and dangerous world. The record of establishing norms in other areas offers a useful place to start—and should dispel the notion that this issue and this time are different.

A NEW FACT OF LIFE (AND WAR)

As cyberattacks become more costly, U.S. strategy to defend against them remains inadequate. A good strategy has to begin at home but simultaneously recognize the inseparability of cyberspace's domestic and international aspects—the domain of cyberspace is inherently transnational. Furthermore, cybersecurity involves a blurring of public and private vulnerabilities. The Internet is a network of networks, most of which are privately owned. Unlike nuclear or conventional weapons, the government does not control them. Accordingly, companies make their own tradeoffs between investing in security and maximizing short-term profit. Yet inadequate corporate defense can have huge external costs for national security: witness the recent Russian cyberattack on SolarWinds software, which allowed access to computers across the U.S. government and the private sector. And unlike with military security, the Pentagon plays only a partial role.

In the realm of global military conflict, computer networks have become a fifth domain, in addition to the traditional four of land, sea, air, and space, and the U.S. military recognized this with the creation of U.S. Cyber Command in 2010. Among the special characteristics of the new cyber-domain are the erosion of distance (oceans no longer provide protection), the speed of interaction (much faster than rockets in space), the low cost (which reduces barriers to entry), and the difficulty of attribution (which promotes deniability and slows responses). Still, skeptics sometimes describe cyberattacks as more of a nuisance than a major strategic problem. They

argue that the cyber-domain is ideal for espionage and other forms of covert action and disruption but that it remains far less important than the traditional domains of warfare; no one has died because of a cyberattack. That, however, is becoming an increasingly difficult position to take. The 2017 WannaCry ransomware attack damaged the British National Health Service by leaving computers encrypted and unusable, forcing thousands of patients' appointments to be canceled, and hospitals and vaccine producers have been directly targeted by ransomware attacks and hackers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What's more, there remains much that even experts do not understand about how the use of cybertools could escalate to physical conflict. Consider, for example, the fact that the U.S. military depends heavily on civilian infrastructure and that cyber-penetrations could seriously degrade U.S. defensive capabilities in a crisis situation. And in economic terms, the scale and cost of cyber-incidents have been increasing. According to some estimates, the Russian-sponsored 2017 NotPetya attack on Ukraine, which wiped data from the computers of banks, power companies, gas stations, and government agencies, cost companies more than \$10 billion in collateral damage. The number of targets is also expanding rapidly. With the rise of big data, artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, and the Internet of Things, experts estimate that the number of Internet connections will approach a trillion by 2030. The world has experienced cyberattacks since the 1980s, but the attack surface has expanded dramatically; it now includes everything from industrial control systems to automobiles to personal digital assistants.

It is clear that the threat is mounting. Less clear is how U.S. strategy can adapt to face it. Deterrence must be part of the approach, but cyber-deterrence will look different from the more traditional and familiar forms of nuclear deterrence that Washington has practiced for decades. A nuclear

attack is a singular event, and the goal of nuclear deterrence is to prevent its occurrence. In contrast, cyberattacks are numerous and constant, and deterring them is more like deterring ordinary crime: the goal is to keep it within limits. Authorities deter crime not only by arresting and punishing people but also through the educational effect of laws and norms, by patrolling neighborhoods, and through community policing. Deterring crime does not require the threat of a mushroom cloud.

Still, punishment plays a large role in cyber-deterrence. The U.S. government has publicly stated that it will respond to cyberattacks with weapons of its choice and with force proportional to the harm inflicted on its interests. Despite a decade of warnings, thus far, a “cyber–Pearl Harbor” has not happened. Whether the United States treats a cyberattack as an armed attack depends on its consequences, but this makes it difficult to deter actions that are more ambiguous. Russia’s disruption of the 2016 U.S. presidential election fell into such a gray area. And although some recent Chinese and Russian cyberattacks appear to have been conducted primarily for the purposes of espionage, the Biden administration has complained that their scale and duration moved them beyond normal spying. This is why deterrence in cyberspace requires not just the threat of punishment but also denial by defense (building systems resilient enough and hard enough to break into that would-be attackers won’t bother to try) and entanglement (creating links to potential adversaries so that any attack they launch will likely harm their own interests, too). Each of these approaches has limits when used on its own. Entanglement has more of an effect when used against China, because of a high degree of economic interdependence, than it does against North Korea, with whom there is none. Denial by defense is effective in deterring nonstate actors and second-tier states but less likely to prevent attacks by more powerful and proficient actors. But the combination

of a threat of punishment and an effective defense can influence these powers' calculations of costs and benefits.

In addition to improving the defense of networks inside the United States, in recent years, Washington has adopted doctrines that U.S. Cyber Command has dubbed “defend forward” and “persistent engagement”—simply put, small-scale acts of cyberoffense, such as the disruption, diversion, or takedown of a network. Some press accounts credit these practices with reducing Russian interference in the 2018 and 2020 U.S. elections. But entering and disrupting an adversary's network poses some danger of escalation and must be carefully managed.

SETTING SOME RULES

Despite its defensive and offensive capabilities, the United States remains highly vulnerable to cyberattacks and influence operations, owing to its free markets and open society. “I think it's a good idea to at least think about the old saw about [how] people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw rocks,” remarked James Clapper, then the director of national intelligence, during 2015 congressional testimony on Washington's responses to cyberattacks. Clapper was stressing, rightly, that although Americans may be the best at throwing stones, they live in the glassiest of houses. That reality gives the United States a particular interest in the development of norms that reduce incentives to throw stones in cyberspace.

Negotiating cyber-arms-control treaties would be extremely difficult, because they would not be verifiable. But diplomacy on cyberspace is hardly impossible. In fact, international cooperation on developing cybernorms has been going on for more than two decades. In 1998, Russia first proposed a UN treaty to ban electronic and information weapons. The United States rejected the idea, arguing that a treaty in this area would be unverifiable

because whether a line of code is a weapon or not can depend on the intent of the user. Instead, the United States agreed that the UN secretary-general should appoint a group of 15 (later expanded to 25) government experts to develop a set of rules of the road; they first met in 2004.

Six such groups have convened since then, and they have issued four reports, creating a broad framework of norms that was later endorsed by the UN General Assembly. The groups' work has strengthened the consensus that international law applies to the domain of cyberspace and is essential for maintaining peace and stability in it. In addition to grappling with complicated questions of international law, the report that was issued in 2015 introduced 11 voluntary, nonbinding norms, the most important ones being a mandate to provide states with assistance when requested and prohibitions against attacking civilian infrastructure, interfering with computer emergency response teams, which respond after big cyberattacks, and allowing one's territory to be used for wrongful acts.

The report was viewed as a breakthrough, but progress slowed in 2017 when the expert group failed to agree on international legal issues and did not produce a consensus report. At Russia's suggestion, the UN supplemented the existing process by forming the Open-Ended Working Group, which is open to all states and involves consultations with nongovernmental actors: dozens of private companies, civil society organizations, academics, and technical experts. Early in 2021, this new group issued a broad, if somewhat anodyne, report that reaffirmed the 2015 norms, as well as the relevance of international law to cyberspace. Last June, the sixth expert group also completed its work and released a report that added important details to the 11 norms first introduced in 2015. China and Russia are still pressing for a treaty, but what is more likely to happen is the gradual evolution of these norms.

In addition to the UN process, there have been many other forums for discussion about cybernorms, including the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace. Initiated in 2017 by a Dutch think tank, with strong support from the Dutch government, the GCSC (of which I was a member) was co-chaired by Estonia, India, and the United States and included former government officials, experts from civil society, and academics from 16 countries. The GCSC proposed eight norms to address gaps in the existing UN guidance. The most important were calls to protect the “public core” infrastructure of the Internet from attack and to prohibit interference with electoral systems. The GCSC also called on countries not to use cybertools to interfere with supply chains; not to introduce botnets into others’ machines in order to control them without the host’s knowledge; to create transparent processes that states can follow in judging whether to disclose flaws and vulnerabilities they discover in others’ coding; to encourage states to promptly patch cybersecurity vulnerabilities when discovered and not hoard them for possible use in the future; to improve “cyber hygiene,” including through law and regulations; and to discourage private vigilantism by making it illegal for private businesses to “hack back,” that is, to launch counterattacks against hackers.

These efforts are less flashy (and less expensive) than the development of sophisticated cyberdefense systems, but they will play a crucial role in curbing malign activity online. Many further norms can be imagined and proposed for cyberspace, but the important question now is not whether more norms are needed but how they will be implemented and whether and when they will alter state behavior.

THE NEW PRIVATEERS

Norms are not effective until they become common state practice, and that can take time. It took many decades for norms against slavery to develop in

Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century. The key question is why states ever let norms constrain their behavior. There are at least four main reasons: coordination, prudence, reputational costs, and domestic pressures, including public opinion and economic changes.

Common expectations inscribed in laws, norms, and principles help states coordinate their efforts. For example, although some states (including the United States) have not ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, all states treat a 12-mile limit as customary international law when it comes to disputes about territorial waters. The benefits of coordination—and the risks posed by its absence—have been evident in cyberspace on the few occasions when targets have been hacked through abuse of the Internet’s domain name system, which is sometimes called “the telephone book of the Internet” and is run by the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN. By corrupting the phone book, such attacks put the basic stability of the Internet at risk. Unless states refrain from interfering with the structure that makes it possible for private networks to connect, there is no Internet. And so, for the most part, states eschew these tactics.

Prudence results from the fear of creating unintended consequences in unpredictable systems and can develop into a norm of nonuse or limited use of certain weapons or a norm of limiting targets. Something like this happened with nuclear weapons when the superpowers came close to the brink of nuclear war in 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis. The Limited Test Ban Treaty followed a year later. A more distant but historical example of how prudence produced a norm against using certain tactics is the fate of privateering. In the eighteenth century, national navies routinely employed private individuals or private ships to augment their power at sea. But in the following century, states turned away from privateers because their

extracurricular pillaging became too costly. As governments struggled to control privateers, attitudes changed, and new norms of prudence and restraint developed. One could imagine something similar occurring in the domain of cyberspace as governments discover that using proxies and private actors to carry out cyberattacks produces negative economic effects and increases the risk of escalation. A number of states have outlawed “hacking back.”

Concerns about damage to a country’s reputation and soft power can also produce voluntary restraint. Taboos develop over time and increase the costs of using or even possessing a weapon that can inflict massive damage. Take, for example, the Biological Weapons Convention, which came into force in 1975. Any country that wishes to develop biological weapons has to do so secretly and illegally and faces widespread international condemnation if evidence of its activities leaks, as the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein discovered.

It is hard to imagine the emergence of a similar blanket taboo against the use of cyberweapons. For one thing, it is difficult to determine whether any particular line of code is a weapon or not. A more likely taboo is one that would prohibit the use of cyberweapons against particular targets, such as hospitals or health-care systems. Such prohibitions would have the benefit of piggybacking on the existing taboo against using conventional weapons on civilians. During the COVID-19 pandemic, public revulsion against ransomware attacks on hospitals has helped reinforce that taboo and suggested how it might apply to other areas in the realm of cyberspace. Something similar might evolve if hackers were to cause an increase in fatal accidents from the use of electric vehicles.

PEER PRESSURE

Some scholars have argued that norms have a natural life cycle. They often begin with “norm entrepreneurs”: individuals, organizations, social groups, and official commissions that enjoy an outsize influence on public opinion. After a certain gestation period, some norms reach a tipping point, when cascades of acceptance translate into a widespread belief and leaders find that they would pay a steep price for rejecting it.

Embryonic norms can arise from changing social attitudes, or they can be imported. Take, for example, the spread of concern for universal human rights after 1945. Western countries took the lead in promoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, but many other states felt obliged to sign on because of public opinion and subsequently found themselves constrained by external pressure and by concern about their reputations. One might expect such constraints to be stronger in democracies than in authoritarian states. But the Helsinki process, a series of meetings between the Soviet Union and Western countries in the early 1970s, successfully included human rights in discussions about political and economic issues during the Cold War.

Economic change can also foster a demand for new norms that might promote efficiency and growth. Norms against privateering and slavery gathered support when these practices were economically in decline. A similar dynamic is at work today in the cyber-realm. Companies that find themselves disadvantaged by conflicting national laws relating to privacy and the location of data might press governments to develop common standards and norms. The cyber-insurance industry may put pressure on authorities to flesh out standards and norms, especially in regard to the technology embedded in the myriad household devices (thermostats, refrigerators, home alarm systems) that are now online: the so-called Internet of Things. As more and more devices become connected to the

Internet, they will soon become targets for cyberattacks, and the impact on citizens' daily lives will increase and foster demand for domestic and international norms. Public concern will only accelerate if hacking becomes more than a nuisance and begins to cost lives. If fatalities increase, the Silicon Valley norm of "build quickly and patch later" may gradually give way to norms and laws about liability that place more emphasis on security.

CYBER-RULES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN

Even with international consensus that norms are needed, agreeing where to draw redlines and what to do when they're crossed is another matter. And the question becomes, even if authoritarian states sign up for normative conventions, how likely are they to adhere to them? In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed not to use cyber-espionage for commercial advantage, but private security companies reported that China adhered to this pledge for only a year or so before it returned to its old habit of hacking U.S. corporate and federal data, although that happened in the context of worsening economic relations marked by the rise of tariff wars. Does this mean the agreement failed? Rather than make it a yes or no question, critics argue that the focus (and any ensuing warning against such actions) should be on the amount of damage done, not the precise lines that were crossed or how the violations were carried out. An analogy is telling the hosts of a drunken party that if the noise gets too loud, you will call the police. The objective is not the impossible one of stopping the music but the more practical one of lowering the volume to a more tolerable level.

There are other times when the United States will need to draw principled lines and defend them. It should acknowledge that it will continue to carry out intrusions in cyberspace for purposes it deems legitimate. And it will need to state precisely the norms and limits that Washington will uphold—

and call out countries that violate them. When China or Russia crosses a line, the United States will have to respond with targeted retaliation. This could involve public sanctions and also private actions, such as freezing the bank accounts of some oligarchs or releasing embarrassing information about them. U.S. Cyber Command's practices of defend forward and persistent engagement can be useful here, although they would best be accompanied by a process of quiet communication.

Treaties regarding cyberspace may be unworkable, but it might be possible to set limits on certain types of behavior and negotiate rough rules of the road. During the Cold War, informal norms governed the treatment of each side's spies; expulsion, rather than execution, became the norm. In 1972, the Soviet Union and the United States negotiated the Incidents at Sea Agreement to limit naval behavior that might lead to escalation. Today, China, Russia, and the United States might negotiate limits on their behavior regarding the extent and type of cyber-espionage they carry out, as Xi and Obama did in 2015. Or they might agree to set limits on their interventions in one another's domestic political processes. Although such pledges would lack the precise language of formal treaties, the three countries could independently make unilateral statements about areas of self-restraint and establish a consultative process to contain conflict. Ideological differences would make a detailed agreement difficult, but even greater ideological differences did not prevent agreements that helped avoid escalation during the Cold War. Prudence can sometimes be more important than ideology.

This seems to have been the approach explored by the Biden administration at a June summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva, where cyberspace played a larger role on the agenda than nuclear weapons. According to press accounts, U.S. President Joe Biden handed Putin a list of

16 areas of critical infrastructure, including chemicals, communications, energy, financial services, health care, and information technology, that should be, in Biden's words, "off limits to attack, period." After the summit, Biden disclosed that he had asked Putin how he would feel if Russian pipelines were taken out by ransomware. "I pointed out to him that we have significant cyber-capability, and he knows it," Biden remarked at a press conference. "He does not know exactly what it is, but it is significant. And if in fact they violate these basic norms, we will respond with cyber. He knows." Thus far, however, it is unclear to what extent Biden's words have been effective.

One problem with specifying what needed to be protected might be that it implied that other areas were fair game—and that ransomware attacks from criminals in Russia would continue no matter what. In the cyber-realm, nonstate actors serve as state proxies to varying degrees, and rules should require their identification and limitation. And because the rules of the road will never be perfect, they must be accompanied by a consultative process that establishes a framework for warning and negotiating. Such a process, together with strong deterrent threats, is unlikely to fully stop Chinese and Russian interference, but if it reduces its frequency or intensity, it could enhance the defense of U.S. democracy against such cyberattacks.

CHANGING BEHAVIOR

In cyberspace, one size does not fit all. There may be some norms related to coordination that can accommodate both authoritarian and democratic states. But others cannot, such as the "Internet freedom" agenda introduced by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2010. It proclaimed a free and open Internet. One can think of norms organized in a set of concentric circles with what Europeans call "variable geometry" of obligations. Groups of democracies can set a higher standard for themselves by agreeing on

norms related to privacy, surveillance, and free expression and enforcing them through special trade agreements that would give preference to those that meet the higher standards, along the lines suggested by the cybersecurity expert Robert Knake. Such agreements could remain open to other states—so long as they are willing and able to meet the higher standards.

Diplomacy among democracies on these issues will not be easy, but it will be an important part of U.S. strategy. As James Miller and Robert Butler, two former senior Pentagon officials, have argued, “If U.S. allies and partners support cyber norms, they are likely to be more willing to support imposing costs on violators, thus substantially improving the credibility, severity (through multilateral cost imposition), and sustainability of U.S. threats to impose costs in response to violations.”

The Biden administration is wrestling with the fact that the domain of cyberspace has created important new opportunities and vulnerabilities in world politics. Reorganizing and reengineering at home must be at the heart of the resulting strategy, but it also needs a strong international component based on deterrence and diplomacy. The diplomatic component must include alliances among democracies, capacity building in developing countries, and improved international institutions. Such a strategy must also include developing norms with the long-term goal of protecting the old glass house of American democracy from the new stones of the Internet age.

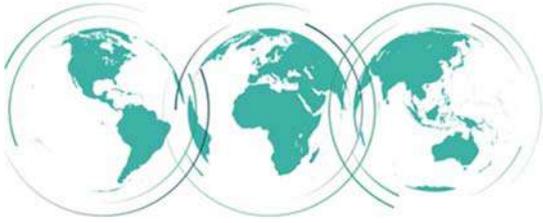
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Session Four

Managing Growing Climate Risk

2021/17/PR

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

9 August 2021

Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying – IPCC

GENEVA, Aug 9 – Scientists are observing changes in the Earth’s climate in every region and across the whole climate system, according to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, released today. Many of the changes observed in the climate are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, and some of the changes already set in motion—such as continued sea level rise—are irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years.

However, strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change. While benefits for air quality would come quickly, it could take 20-30 years to see global temperatures stabilize, according to the IPCC Working Group I report, *Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis*, approved on Friday by 195 member governments of the IPCC, through a virtual approval session that was held over two weeks starting on July 26.

The Working Group I report is the first instalment of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which will be completed in 2022.

“This report reflects extraordinary efforts under exceptional circumstances,” said Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC. “The innovations in this report, and advances in climate science that it reflects, provide an invaluable input into climate negotiations and decision-making.”

Faster warming

The report provides new estimates of the chances of crossing the global warming level of 1.5°C in the next decades, and finds that unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach.

The report shows that emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900, and finds that averaged over the next 20 years, global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming. This assessment is based on improved observational datasets to assess historical warming, as well progress in scientific understanding of the response of the climate system to human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

“This report is a reality check,” said IPCC Working Group I Co-Chair Valérie Masson-Delmotte. “We now have a much clearer picture of the past, present and future climate, which is essential for understanding where we are headed, what can be done, and how we can prepare.”

Every region facing increasing changes

Many characteristics of climate change directly depend on the level of global warming, but what people experience is often very different to the global average. For example, warming over land is larger than the global average, and it is more than twice as high in the Arctic.

“Climate change is already affecting every region on Earth, in multiple ways. The changes we experience will increase with additional warming,” said IPCC Working Group I Co-Chair Panmao Zhai.

The report projects that in the coming decades climate changes will increase in all regions. For 1.5°C of global warming, there will be increasing heat waves, longer warm seasons and shorter cold seasons. At 2°C of global warming, heat extremes would more often reach critical tolerance thresholds for agriculture and health, the report shows.

But it is not just about temperature. Climate change is bringing multiple different changes in different regions – which will all increase with further warming. These include changes to wetness and dryness, to winds, snow and ice, coastal areas and oceans. For example:

- Climate change is intensifying the water cycle. This brings more intense rainfall and associated flooding, as well as more intense drought in many regions.
- Climate change is affecting rainfall patterns. In high latitudes, precipitation is likely to increase, while it is projected to decrease over large parts of the subtropics. Changes to monsoon precipitation are expected, which will vary by region.
- Coastal areas will see continued sea level rise throughout the 21st century, contributing to more frequent and severe coastal flooding in low-lying areas and coastal erosion. Extreme sea level events that previously occurred once in 100 years could happen every year by the end of this century.
- Further warming will amplify permafrost thawing, and the loss of seasonal snow cover, melting of glaciers and ice sheets, and loss of summer Arctic sea ice.
- Changes to the ocean, including warming, more frequent marine heatwaves, ocean acidification, and reduced oxygen levels have been clearly linked to human influence. These changes affect both ocean ecosystems and the people that rely on them, and they will continue throughout at least the rest of this century.
- For cities, some aspects of climate change may be amplified, including heat (since urban areas are usually warmer than their surroundings), flooding from heavy precipitation events and sea level rise in coastal cities.

For the first time, the Sixth Assessment Report provides a more detailed regional assessment of climate change, including a focus on useful information that can inform risk assessment, adaptation, and other decision-making, and a new framework that helps translate physical changes in the climate – heat, cold, rain, drought, snow, wind, coastal flooding and more – into what they mean for society and ecosystems.

This regional information can be explored in detail in the newly developed Interactive Atlas interactive-atlas.ipcc.ch as well as regional fact sheets, the technical summary, and underlying report.

Human influence on the past and future climate

“It has been clear for decades that the Earth’s climate is changing, and the role of human influence on the climate system is undisputed,” said Masson-Delmotte. Yet the new report also reflects major advances in the science of attribution – understanding the role of climate change in intensifying specific weather and climate events such as extreme heat waves and heavy rainfall events.

The report also shows that human actions still have the potential to determine the future course of climate. The evidence is clear that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the main driver of climate change, even as other greenhouse gases and air pollutants also affect the climate.

“Stabilizing the climate will require strong, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and reaching net zero CO₂ emissions. Limiting other greenhouse gases and air pollutants, especially methane, could have benefits both for health and the climate,” said Zhai.

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Notes for Editors

Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Working Group I report addresses the most updated physical understanding of the climate system and climate change, bringing together the latest advances in climate science, and combining multiple lines of evidence from paleoclimate, observations, process understanding, global and regional climate simulations. It shows how and why climate has changed to date, and the improved

understanding of human influence on a wider range of climate characteristics, including extreme events. There will be a greater focus on regional information that can be used for climate risk assessments.

The Summary for Policymakers of the Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) as well as additional materials and information are available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>

Note: Originally scheduled for release in April 2021, the report was delayed for several months by the COVID-19 pandemic, as work in the scientific community including the IPCC shifted online. This is first time that the IPCC has conducted a virtual approval session for one of its reports.

AR6 Working Group I in numbers

234 authors from 66 countries

- 31 – coordinating authors
- 167 – lead authors
- 36 – review editors

plus

- 517 - contributing authors

Over 14,000 cited references

A total of 78,007 expert and government review comments

(First Order Draft 23,462; Second Order Draft 51,387; Final Government Distribution: 3,158)

More information about the Sixth Assessment Report can be found [here](#).

About the IPCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide political leaders with periodic scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. In the same year the UN General Assembly endorsed the action by the WMO and UNEP in jointly establishing the IPCC. It has 195 member states.

Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. For the assessment reports, IPCC scientists volunteer their time to assess the thousands of scientific papers published each year to provide a comprehensive summary of what is known about the drivers of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce those risks.

The IPCC has three working groups: [Working Group I](#), dealing with the physical science basis of climate change; [Working Group II](#), dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and [Working Group III](#), dealing with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a [Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#) that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals. As part of the IPCC, a Task Group on Data Support for Climate Change Assessments (TG-Data) provides guidance to the Data Distribution Centre (DDC) on curation, traceability, stability, availability and transparency of data and scenarios related to the reports of the IPCC.

IPCC assessments provide governments, at all levels, with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC assessments are a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change. IPCC reports are drafted and reviewed in several stages, thus guaranteeing objectivity and transparency. An IPCC assessment report consists of the contributions of the three working groups and a Synthesis Report. The Synthesis Report integrates the findings of the three working group reports and of any special reports prepared in that assessment cycle.

About the Sixth Assessment Cycle

At its 41st Session in February 2015, the IPCC decided to produce a Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). At its 42nd Session in October 2015 it elected a new Bureau that would oversee the work on this report and the Special Reports to be produced in the assessment cycle.

[*Global Warming of 1.5°C*](#), an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty was launched in October 2018.

[*Climate Change and Land*](#), an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems was launched in August 2019, and the [*Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*](#) was released in September 2019.

In May 2019 the IPCC released the [*2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*](#), an update to the methodology used by governments to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

The other two Working Group contributions to the AR6 will be finalized in 2022 and the AR6 Synthesis Report will be completed in the second half of 2022.

For more information go to www.ipcc.ch

The website includes [outreach materials](#) including videos about the IPCC and video recordings from [outreach events](#) conducted as webinars or live-streamed events.

2022/08/PR

28 February 2022

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

Climate change: a threat to human wellbeing and health of the planet. Taking action now can secure our future

BERLIN, Feb 28 – Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world, despite efforts to reduce the risks. People and ecosystems least able to cope are being hardest hit, said scientists in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, released today.

“This report is a dire warning about the consequences of inaction,” said Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC. “It shows that climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our wellbeing and a healthy planet. Our actions today will shape how people adapt and nature responds to increasing climate risks.”

The world faces unavoidable multiple climate hazards over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5°C (2.7°F). Even temporarily exceeding this warming level will result in additional severe impacts, some of which will be irreversible. Risks for society will increase, including to infrastructure and low-lying coastal settlements.

The Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC Working Group II report, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* was approved on Sunday, February 27 2022, by 195 member governments of the IPCC, through a virtual approval session that was held over two weeks starting on February 14.

Urgent action required to deal with increasing risks

Increased heatwaves, droughts and floods are already exceeding plants’ and animals’ tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals. These weather extremes are occurring simultaneously, causing cascading impacts that are increasingly difficult to manage. They have exposed millions of people to acute food and water insecurity, especially in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, on Small Islands and in the Arctic.

To avoid mounting loss of life, biodiversity and infrastructure, ambitious, accelerated action is required to adapt to climate change, at the same time as making rapid, deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. So far, progress on adaptation is uneven and there are increasing gaps between action taken and what is needed to deal with the increasing risks, the new report finds. These gaps are largest among lower-income populations.

The Working Group II report is the second instalment of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which will be completed this year.

“This report recognizes the interdependence of climate, biodiversity and people and integrates natural, social and economic sciences more strongly than earlier IPCC assessments,” said Hoesung Lee. “It emphasizes the urgency of immediate and more ambitious action to address climate risks. Half measures are no longer an option.”

Safeguarding and strengthening nature is key to securing a liveable future

There are options to adapt to a changing climate. This report provides new insights into nature’s potential not only to reduce climate risks but also to improve people's lives.

“Healthy ecosystems are more resilient to climate change and provide life-critical services such as food and clean water”, said IPCC Working Group II Co-Chair Hans-Otto Pörtner. “By restoring degraded ecosystems and effectively and equitably conserving 30 to 50 per cent of Earth’s land, freshwater and ocean habitats, society can benefit from nature’s capacity to absorb and store carbon, and we can accelerate progress towards sustainable development, but adequate finance and political support are essential.”

Scientists point out that climate change interacts with global trends such as unsustainable use of natural resources, growing urbanization, social inequalities, losses and damages from extreme events and a pandemic, jeopardizing future development.

“Our assessment clearly shows that tackling all these different challenges involves everyone – governments, the private sector, civil society – working together to prioritize risk reduction, as well as equity and justice, in decision-making and investment,” said IPCC Working Group II Co-Chair Debra Roberts.

“In this way, different interests, values and world views can be reconciled. By bringing together scientific and technological know-how as well as Indigenous and local knowledge, solutions will be more effective. Failure to achieve climate resilient and sustainable development will result in a sub-optimal future for people and nature.”

Cities: Hotspots of impacts and risks, but also a crucial part of the solution

This report provides a detailed assessment of climate change impacts, risks and adaptation in cities, where more than half the world’s population lives. People’s health, lives and livelihoods, as well as property and critical infrastructure, including energy and transportation systems, are being increasingly adversely affected by hazards from heatwaves, storms, drought and flooding as well as slow-onset changes, including sea level rise.

“Together, growing urbanization and climate change create complex risks, especially for those cities that already experience poorly planned urban growth, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and a lack of basic services,” Debra Roberts said.

“But cities also provide opportunities for climate action – green buildings, reliable supplies of clean water and renewable energy, and sustainable transport systems that connect urban and rural areas can all lead to a more inclusive, fairer society.”

There is increasing evidence of adaptation that has caused unintended consequences, for example destroying nature, putting peoples’ lives at risk or increasing greenhouse gas emissions. This can be avoided by involving everyone in planning, attention to equity and justice, and drawing on Indigenous and local knowledge.

A narrowing window for action

Climate change is a global challenge that requires local solutions and that’s why the Working Group II contribution to the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) provides extensive regional information to enable Climate Resilient Development.

The report clearly states Climate Resilient Development is already challenging at current warming levels. It will become more limited if global warming exceeds 1.5°C (2.7°F). In some regions it will be impossible if global warming exceeds 2°C (3.6°F). This key finding underlines the urgency for climate action, focusing on equity and justice. Adequate funding, technology transfer, political commitment and partnership lead to more effective climate change adaptation and emissions reductions.

“The scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and the health of the planet. Any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future,” said Hans-Otto Pörtner.

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Notes for Editors

Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Working Group II report examines the impacts of climate change on nature and people around the globe. It explores future impacts at different levels of warming and the resulting risks and offers options to strengthen nature’s and society’s resilience to ongoing climate change, to fight hunger, poverty, and inequality and keep Earth a place worth living on – for current as well as for future generations.

Working Group II introduces several new components in its latest report: One is a special section on climate change impacts, risks and options to act for cities and settlements by the sea, tropical forests, mountains, biodiversity hotspots, dryland and deserts, the Mediterranean as well as the polar regions. Another is an atlas that will present data and findings on observed and projected climate change impacts and risks from global to regional scales, thus offering even more insights for decision makers.

The Summary for Policymakers of the Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) as well as additional materials and information are available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

Note: Originally scheduled for release in September 2021, the report was delayed for several months by the COVID-19 pandemic, as work in the scientific community including the IPCC shifted online. This is the second time that the IPCC has conducted a virtual approval session for one of its reports.

AR6 Working Group II in numbers

270 authors from 67 countries

- 47 – coordinating authors
- 184 – lead authors
- 39 – review editors

plus

- 675 – contributing authors

Over 34,000 cited references

A total of 62,418 expert and government review comments

(First Order Draft 16,348; Second Order Draft 40,293; Final Government Distribution: 5,777)

More information about the Sixth Assessment Report can be found [here](#).

Additional media resources

Assets available after the embargo is lifted on [Media Essentials website](#).

Press conference recording, collection of sound bites from WGII authors, link to presentation slides, B-roll of approval session, link to launch Trello board including press release and video trailer in UN languages, a social media pack.

The website includes outreach materials such as videos about the IPCC and video recordings from outreach events conducted as webinars or live-streamed events.

Most videos published by the IPCC can be found on our YouTube channel.

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In May 2019 the IPCC released the [*2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*](#), an update to the methodology used by governments to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

In August 2021 the IPCC released the Working Group I contribution to the AR6, Climate Change 2021, the Physical Science Basis

The Working Group III contribution to the AR6 is scheduled for early April 2022.

The Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report will be completed in the second half of 2022.

For more information go to www.ipcc.ch

2022/15/PR

4 April 2022

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

The evidence is clear: the time for action is now. We can halve emissions by 2030.

GENEVA, Apr 4 – In 2010-2019 average annual global greenhouse gas emissions were at their highest levels in human history, but the rate of growth has slowed. Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, limiting global warming to 1.5°C is beyond reach. However, there is increasing evidence of climate action, said scientists in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released today.

Since 2010, there have been sustained decreases of up to 85% in the costs of solar and wind energy, and batteries. An increasing range of policies and laws have enhanced energy efficiency, reduced rates of deforestation and accelerated the deployment of renewable energy.

“We are at a crossroads. The decisions we make now can secure a liveable future. We have the tools and know-how required to limit warming,” said IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee. “I am encouraged by climate action being taken in many countries. There are policies, regulations and market instruments that are proving effective. If these are scaled up and applied more widely and equitably, they can support deep emissions reductions and stimulate innovation.”

The Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC Working Group III report, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of climate change* was approved on April 4 2022, by 195 member governments of the IPCC, through a virtual approval session that started on March 21. It is the third instalment of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which will be completed this year.

We have options in all sectors to at least halve emissions by 2030

Limiting global warming will require major transitions in the energy sector. This will involve a substantial reduction in fossil fuel use, widespread electrification, improved energy efficiency, and use of alternative fuels (such as hydrogen).

“Having the right policies, infrastructure and technology in place to enable changes to our lifestyles and behaviour can result in a 40-70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This offers significant untapped potential,” said IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Priyadarshi Shukla. “The evidence also shows that these lifestyle changes can improve our health and wellbeing.”

Cities and other urban areas also offer significant opportunities for emissions reductions. These can be achieved through lower energy consumption (such as by creating compact, walkable cities), electrification of transport in combination with low-emission energy sources, and enhanced carbon uptake and storage using nature. There are options for established, rapidly growing and new cities.

“We see examples of zero energy or zero-carbon buildings in almost all climates,” said IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Jim Skea. “Action in this decade is critical to capture the mitigation potential of buildings.”

Reducing emissions in industry will involve using materials more efficiently, reusing and recycling products and minimising waste. For basic materials, including steel, building materials and chemicals, low- to zero-greenhouse gas production processes are at their pilot to near-commercial stage.

This sector accounts for about a quarter of global emissions. Achieving net zero will be challenging and will require new production processes, low and zero emissions electricity, hydrogen, and, where necessary, carbon capture and storage.

Agriculture, forestry, and other land use can provide large-scale emissions reductions and also remove and store carbon dioxide at scale. However, land cannot compensate for delayed emissions reductions in other sectors. Response options can benefit biodiversity, help us adapt to climate change, and secure livelihoods, food and water, and wood supplies.

The next few years are critical

In the scenarios we assessed, limiting warming to around 1.5°C (2.7°F) requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030; at the same time, methane would also need to be reduced by about a third. Even if we do this, it is almost inevitable that we will temporarily exceed this temperature threshold but could return to below it by the end of the century.

“It’s now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F),” said Skea. “Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible.”

The global temperature will stabilise when carbon dioxide emissions reach net zero. For 1.5°C (2.7°F), this means achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions globally in the early 2050s; for 2°C (3.6°F), it is in the early 2070s.

This assessment shows that limiting warming to around 2°C (3.6°F) still requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by a quarter by 2030.

Closing investment gaps

The report looks beyond technologies and demonstrates that while financial flows are a factor of three to six times lower than levels needed by 2030 to limit warming to below 2°C (3.6°F), there is sufficient global capital and liquidity to close investment gaps. However, it relies on clear signalling from governments and the international community, including a stronger alignment of public sector finance and policy.

“Without taking into account the economic benefits of reduced adaptation costs or avoided climate impacts, global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be just a few percentage points lower in 2050 if we take the actions necessary to limit warming to 2°C (3.6°F) or below, compared to maintaining current policies,” said Shukla.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Accelerated and equitable climate action in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts is critical to sustainable development. Some response options can absorb and store carbon and, at the same time, help communities limit the impacts associated with climate change. For example, in cities, networks of parks and open spaces, wetlands and urban agriculture can reduce flood risk and reduce heat-island effects.

Mitigation in industry can reduce environmental impacts and increase employment and business opportunities. Electrification with renewables and shifts in public transport can enhance health, employment, and equity.

“Climate change is the result of more than a century of unsustainable energy and land use, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production,” said Skea. “This report shows how taking action now can move us towards a fairer, more sustainable world.”

ENDS

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Notes for editors:

Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Working Group III report provides an updated global assessment of climate change mitigation progress and pledges, and examines the sources of global emissions. It explains developments in emission reduction and mitigation efforts, assessing the impact of national climate pledges in relation to long-term emissions goals.

Working Group III introduces several new components in its latest report: One is a new chapter on the social aspects of mitigation, which explores the ‘demand side’, i.e. what drives consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This chapter is a partner to the sectoral chapters in the report, which explore the ‘supply side’ of climate change - what produces emissions. There is also a cross-sector chapter on mitigation options that cut across sectors, including carbon dioxide removal techniques. And there is a new chapter on innovation, technology development and transfer, which describes how a well-established innovation system at a national level, guided by well-designed policies, can contribute to mitigation, adaptation and achieving the sustainable development goals, while avoiding undesired consequences.

The Summary for Policymakers of the Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) as well as additional materials and information are available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

Note: Originally scheduled for release in July 2021, the report was delayed for several months by the COVID-19 pandemic, as work in the scientific community including the IPCC shifted online. This is the third time that the IPCC has conducted a virtual approval session for one of its reports.

AR6 Working Group III in numbers

278 authors from 65 countries

- 36 – coordinating lead authors
- 163 – lead authors
- 38 – review editors

plus

- 354 – contributing authors

Over 18,000 cited references

A total of 59,212 expert and government review comments

(First Order Draft 21,703; Second Order Draft 32,555; Final Government Distribution: 4, 954)

About the IPCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide political leaders with periodic scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. In the same year the UN General Assembly endorsed the action by the WMO and UNEP in jointly establishing the IPCC. It has 195 member states.

Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. For the assessment reports, experts volunteer their time as IPCC authors to assess the thousands of scientific papers published each year to provide a comprehensive summary of what is known about the drivers of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce those risks.

The IPCC has three working groups: [Working Group I](#), dealing with the physical science basis of climate change; [Working Group II](#), dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and [Working Group III](#), dealing with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a [Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#) that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals.

IPCC assessments provide governments, at all levels, with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC assessments are a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change. IPCC reports are drafted and reviewed in several stages, thus guaranteeing objectivity and transparency.

About the Sixth Assessment Cycle

Comprehensive scientific assessment reports are published every 6 to 7 years; the latest, the [Fifth Assessment Report](#), was completed in 2014 and provided the main scientific input to the Paris Agreement.

At its 41st Session in February 2015, the IPCC decided to produce a [Sixth Assessment Report](#) (AR6). At its 42nd Session in October 2015 it elected a new Bureau that would oversee the work on this report and Special Reports to be produced in the assessment cycle. At its 43rd Session in April 2016, it decided to produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report and AR6.

The Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report [Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#) was released on 9 August 2021. The Working Group II contribution, [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#), was released on 28 February 2022.

The concluding Synthesis Report is due in autumn 2022.

The IPCC also publishes special reports on more specific issues between assessment reports.

[Global Warming of 1.5°C](#), an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7°F) above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty was launched in October 2018.

[Climate Change and Land](#), an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems was launched in August 2019, and the [Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#) was released in September 2019.

In May 2019 the IPCC released the [2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#), an update to the methodology used by governments to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

For more information visit www.ipcc.ch.

The website includes [outreach materials](#) including videos about the IPCC and video recordings from [outreach events](#) conducted as webinars or live-streamed events.

Most videos published by the IPCC can be found on our [YouTube](#) channel.

from The Internationalist *and* International Institutions and Global Governance Program

To Reduce Growing Climate Dangers, the World Needs to Consider Sunlight Reflection

Nothing about the present climate crisis or its implications is natural. Perhaps how the world deals with a warming planet shouldn't be either.



The sun reflects off the water in a picture taken by German astronaut Alexander Gerst from the International Space Station and sent on his Twitter feed on July 17, 2014. Alexander Gerst/Reuters/NASA/Handout via Reuters

Blog Post by Stewart M. Patrick

April 27, 2022 8:08 am (EST)

For too long, sunlight reflection has been the third rail of climate change politics, a relegation that has severely crippled its basic research and discussion in diplomatic circles. This situation, however, is starting to change as the devastating implications of a fast-warming planet become impossible to ignore. Today, the Council on Foreign Relations released a new Special Report on the topic: *Reflecting Sunlight to Reduce Climate Risk: Priorities for Research and International Cooperation*. It calls on the United States to launch a robust sunlight reflection research program and spearhead international negotiations to advance multilateral scientific assessments of and collective decision-making regarding these novel techniques and their potential future implementation.

Sunlight reflection, also known as solar climate intervention (SCI) or solar geoengineering, would entail reflecting a tiny percentage of sunlight back into space to reduce the heating effects of solar radiation on greenhouse gases, thus limiting—and conceivably even reducing—the rise in global temperatures that would otherwise occur. The two simplest and most cost-effective means of doing so would be either dispersing aerosols in the stratosphere or spraying salt crystals from ocean-based platforms to brighten low-lying marine clouds.

While these interventions may sound radical, they have existing analogues. The first approach, for instance, would mimic the cooling effect of volcanic eruptions like that of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines in 1991, which reduced global temperatures between 0.5 and 1.1°C over the next fifteen months.

The Internationalist

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Desperate times, moreover, may call for desperate measures. As the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment cycle make clear, the climate emergency is now. Unfortunately, the world's current approaches to preventing catastrophic warming and muting its implications are failing. Just yesterday, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction warned that climate change is putting humanity on course for a "spiral of self-destruction." Thanks to unchecked global warming, once rare calamities like extreme heatwaves, prolonged droughts, violent storms, and catastrophic floods are becoming commonplace. The number of major disasters per year quadrupled from about ninety to one hundred during the period between 1970 and 2000 to about 400 in 2015. This number could increase to 560 (or 1.5 per day) by 2030.

Such a dramatic rise in what are still misleadingly called "natural" disasters exposes the inadequacy of humanity's existing portfolio of strategies for managing climate risk. That portfolio currently includes three approaches: emissions reductions, carbon removal, and adaptation. Unfortunately, all three are lagging and have inherent limitations. Emissions, which must be halved over the next eight years to meet the Paris Agreement's target of holding global temperature rise to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels, are instead on track to rise 16.3 percent by 2030. Direct air capture of atmospheric carbon, whether by negative emissions technologies or nature-based solutions like planting trees, will take decades to achieve necessary scale. Efforts to build resilience to adapt to global warming, meanwhile, are hugely expensive, underfunded, and deeply imperfect: much of the coming suffering associated with a warming planet will simply need to be borne.

Given the deepening climate catastrophe, the world cannot afford to ignore a potentially fast-acting, low-cost, and high-leverage way to limit increasing global temperatures and their attendant effects, even as it seeks to make steady progress on the other three fronts. That method is sunlight reflection.

Critics have raised numerous concerns about sunlight reflection, some reasonable and others exaggerated. Among the most influential is that SCI would create a moral hazard, giving companies (particularly in the fossil fuel sector), governments, and consumers a seeming hall pass to continue their polluting ways. These possible risks need to be scrutinized and assessed. At the same time, given the escalating threat that rising temperatures pose to both social and natural systems, they should be evaluated and weighted not in isolation, but alongside the known dangers of climate change.

Thus, the relevant question for policymakers and publics is this: would sunlight reflection amplify or in fact reduce the climate change dangers? Unfortunately, it is one the world is in no position to answer. Consideration of SCI is restricted by major gaps in basic atmospheric and other sciences regarding the feasibility of such approaches and their likely impacts on natural and human environments. The world also lacks any agreed-upon international rules of the road for governing the actual implementation of these under-researched and untested techniques.

Such knowledge and governance lacunae leave policymakers flying blind, unable to make informed decisions about whether to pursue SCI. Furthermore, the absence of multilateral norms and rules to inform deployment increases the likelihood that a single government could decide to take matters into its own hands, with destabilizing consequences.

To begin to close the first, knowledge gap, *Reflecting Sunlight to Reduce Climate Risk* recommends that the United States launch an ambitious program of SCI research, grounded in international cooperation. To close the second, governance gap, the report

calls on the United States and other governments to begin negotiations on multilateral frameworks capable of jointly assessing alternative SCI approaches and taking collective decisions about their implementation.

As the report repeatedly emphasizes, sunlight reflection is not a *solution* to climate change. It is, at best, a stopgap strategy to buy the world time as it undertakes the arduous and protracted tasks of shifting away from fossil fuels, removing accumulated stocks of atmospheric carbon, and adapting to an already warming world. Giving sunlight reflection a chance could give humanity one to survive this painful transition.

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SWP Comment

NO. 2 JANUARY 2022

Next COP Ahead: Europe Has Work to Do

Susanne Dröge and Oliver Geden

International climate negotiations at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow were surprisingly productive. The Glasgow Climate Pact adds new tasks to the already full climate agendas of the European Union and its member states. European policy makers will need to focus even more on limiting the long-term temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to secure adequate commitments and action by the biggest global greenhouse gas emitters – all before the next COP in Egypt (COP27) at the end of 2022. Climate financing also needs to be secured in a manner that generates trust on the part of the developing countries. Germany's G7 presidency in 2022 will be crucial for accelerating international climate cooperation. The German government must also work to involve the G20 states and push to speed up adoption of the European Union's Fit for 55 package.

As the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) demonstrated yet again, implementing the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 requires continuous engagement by state and non-state actors to generate momentum over and above the primarily procedural obligations. Lack of ambition in emissions reduction and agreement on the main causes of the ongoing rise in greenhouse gas emissions were still the key issues in Glasgow. For the first time the final declaration – the Glasgow Climate Pact – explicitly names two central drivers of climate change: coal power generation and fossil fuel subsidies.

Challenging Circumstances

The portents for COP26 were anything but rosy. The conference had to be postponed for a year because of the pandemic, and COP25 in Madrid in 2019 had produced little progress on critical issues. In particular there was no agreement on the last unresolved issues from the "Paris Rulebook", which provides guidance on implementing the Paris Agreement. The United States withdrew from the international process in 2017 and only returned to the negotiating table at the beginning of 2021 (see SWP Comment 14/2021). Moreover, civil society scepticism about the UN climate process became louder, protesters claimed that out-



comes of the climate conferences were inadequate: too much talk, too little action.

The ambitions of the British hosts remained moderate until shortly before the conference began, even though the preparations had proceeded well in 2021. Early that year, the new US administration invigorated the international process by rejoining the Paris Agreement and leaning diplomatically on influential states. The G7 and G20 – under British and Italian presidency respectively – also made important contributions for a successful COP26, for example by announcing that they would end international financing for coal-fired power plants.

Efforts to encourage governments to update their *Nationally Determined Contributions* (NDCs) and increase their targets for 2030 were less successful, however. Updating after five years had been agreed in the Paris Agreement and was due in 2020. Furthermore, many states still lacked long-term national decarbonisation plans in which they communicate target years for achieving net zero emissions.

“Keeping 1.5°C Alive” – the Conference Outcomes

The Glasgow conference produced two types of outcome: On the one hand, the results of the official UNFCCC workstreams and a final declaration approved by all 197 parties. On the other, diverse initiatives supported by individual countries and groups outside the official UNFCCC negotiating agenda.

In the COP26 outcome document the parties agreed to focus international climate policy more strongly on the 1.5°C target. The Paris Agreement of 2015 aims to restrict the temperature rise to “well below 2°C” while only “pursuing efforts” to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The 2018 IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C shifted the focus, not least on the basis of changing risk perceptions.

At the end of 2021 the *remaining carbon budget* for the 1.5-degree target is merely

320 – 420 gigatonnes, against current annual global emissions of just above 40 gigatonnes. In that context the British COP presidency’s insistence on keeping the 1.5 degree target “within reach” can be understood as anticipating that a temporary temperature overshoot starting in the mid-2030s will be unavoidable. In order to get back below 1.5 °C in the course of the century, more CO₂ will eventually have to be withdrawn from the atmosphere than is emitted (net negative emissions). This is laid out in the “Summary for Policymakers” in the latest IPCC report (August 2021) but has not to date been communicated clearly in the UNFCCC context.

One key success of COP26 was to finalise the Paris Rulebook. Article 6, on the rules for international emissions trading, remained a sticking point to the last. Also common timeframes were agreed for the NDC process. The target years and implementation periods are now identical for all parties, improving the comparability of updates and making it easier to determine the emission reductions resulting from national climate policy measures. Overall, common timeframes increase the transparency of international climate policy and allow more precise estimates of the medium-term global emissions trajectory.

Improved Temperature Estimates Based Mainly on Pledges

The projections for global warming by the end of the century – studies presented during COP26 suggest a range from 1.8 to 2.7 °C – that have come to dominate media coverage are problematic in three respects. First of all, they almost all assume that governments will keep their promises. Secondly, they extrapolate national emissions pathways to the end of the century even though most governments have formulated targets only for 2030 (in some cases also for mid-century). And thirdly, comparison with similar calculations made in the past creates a false impression of dramatic climate policy progress. In fact the effect is largely attributable to announce-

ments being more ambitious, partly also to an expansion of the remaining global carbon budget in recent IPCC reports. In fact annual emissions have continued to increase – albeit more slowly – since the Paris Agreement of 2015. In 2021 they have returned almost to pre-Covid levels.

Not least for that reason, short- and medium-term ambition level upgrades play a central role in the UNFCCC negotiations. Long before the Glasgow COP the parties had been called on to submit more ambitious NDCs. The EU did so in December 2020 when it raised its reduction target for 2030 from 40 to 55 percent (baseline 1990). Other G20 members like the United States, Turkey and South Africa followed in 2021, China just a few days before the COP. India made only verbal announcements and some countries simply submitted their old figures. Against this background, the signatories of the Glasgow Climate Pact call for more ambitious national targets for 2030 to be defined during 2022. This applies above all to those states that have yet to submit an update. But it is unclear whether major emitters like Russia, China, India and Brazil will respond to this non-binding request. The governments of Australia and New Zealand announced immediately after COP26 that they would not be increasing their targets for 2030.

The European Commission has already declared that the EU will not be announcing a new NDC with increased ambition in 2022. Nor does the coalition agreement of the new German government – published after Glasgow – go any further than the existing climate targets for 2030. The dominant view within the EU is that its priority must be to actually implement the promises already made.

Further COP26 Initiatives

In the run-up to the Glasgow meeting, the British hosts announced and sought partners for four additional initiatives: phasing out coal, phasing out the internal combustion engine, increasing financial assistance and afforestation (*“coal, cars, cash and trees”*).

Concerning coal, various announcements and initiatives had already been set in motion: the G7 and G20 decisions to end international financing of coal power projects; the turn to “clean” coal (with carbon capture and subsequent re-use or underground storage); and financial support, such as the Just Energy Transition Partnership agreed with South Africa. In the latter, a group of donors – the European Union, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States – agreed to fund a programme totalling US\$8.5 billion. The South Africa deal is part of a portfolio of coal phase-out financing agreements that also includes Asian countries and brings new donors to the table.

Another initiative is the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA) launched by Denmark and Costa Rica, which brings together states and regions seeking a just transition from oil and gas.

Reducing methane emissions was another prominent concern in advance of COP26. US President Joe Biden and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen launched the Global Methane Pledge, aiming to reduce methane emissions by 30 percent between 2020 and 2030 and to measure progress using the latest technologies. To date 105 states have signed up. Reducing methane is also an important goal of the joint statement by China and the United States.

The number of new initiatives announcing cooperation on reducing emission from fossil fuels is larger than ever. A closer look reveals that the participants and topics frequently overlap. Given that similar initiatives already exist, a systematic stocktaking and clarification of the relationships between the various initiatives on energy transitions, financing and technological cooperation would be useful. Moreover, it is an open question whether the new initiatives are supposed to support participating countries in achieving their existing NDC targets or to enable them to raise their aims.

From COP26 to COP27

Not all countries are enthusiastic about the outcomes of the Glasgow meeting and many civil society actors remain sceptical. One reason is the repeated experience that powerful players can overturn an agreed consensus at the very last minute – as China and India did over the wording on coal-fired power – while smaller states are denied such possibilities.

The many vulnerable countries are also dissatisfied with the pace of progress on measures for adapting to climate change and criticise poor follow-through on financial commitments. They demand that climate adaptation be recognised as a global challenge, not just a national or regional one. In Glasgow the poorer states succeeded in persuading the industrialised nations to increase their funding for climate adaptation for the period 2019–2025. The donor countries promised a doubling of these funds. That would correct the existing imbalance, where climate finance has to date concentrated largely on reducing emissions. The size of the relatively small Adaptation Fund was doubled and a levy on international emissions trading will be used to fund adaptation measures. Yet these commitments still fall short of the promise made by the industrialised countries at COP15 in Copenhagen to provide US\$100 billion annually from public and private sources to support developing countries.

The vulnerable countries also remain dissatisfied with the rich states' engagement on the issue of "loss and damage". Although liability and compensation for the impacts of climate change are longstanding demands in the negotiations, such initiatives have been repeatedly blocked, mostly by Washington which anticipates large financial claims (see SWP Research Paper 6/2020). The Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon thus broke a taboo, committing one million pounds for loss and damage. If the lack of trust is to be addressed, initiating further financial commitments will need to be a central element of the preparations for COP27 in Sharm al-Sheikh.

Europa Has Work to Do

While London hands the COP presidency on to Cairo, the EU will be working in 2022 to speed up adoption of the Fit for 55 package. It comprises a wide range of measures and will allow the EU to demonstrate to other nations that it is serious about delivering of climate targets – and how this can be organised. At the same time, this puts pressure on those states that lag behind on implementation and NDC ambition. However, there will be no further strengthening of EU climate targets under the 2022 upgrade agreed in Glasgow. The EU has already exhausted its scope to do so. It will now have to demonstrate that it is able to share the burdens of the 55 percent target fairly between its member states and among economic sectors – an endeavour with significant potential for conflict in light of the recent energy price increases.

Even if the EU and the member states underline that their own climate plans are aligned with the 1.5-degree target, they must also continue to lead the way on tackling the expected global temperature overshoot. Such engagement could help to persuade the other major emitters to improve their NDCs. The European Commission's strategy on "Sustainable Carbon Cycles" unveiled in December 2021 lays out in detail for the first time how the EU could promote and regulate methods for removing CO₂ from the atmosphere. The debate now also gaining traction in the EU institutions shows that the vision of long-term net negative emissions formulated in the climate framework legislation of the EU and some of its member states (for example Finland, Sweden and Germany) is being taken increasingly seriously. Given that the IPCC is reporting that exceedance of the 1.5-degree threshold is probably inevitable in the 2030s, the ubiquitous communication of the "path towards 1.5-degrees" should be interpreted as follows: European climate policy is seeking to contribute to bringing global warming back down to the 1.5-degree threshold (from above) in the longer term. This will only be possible if net nega-

tive CO₂ emissions are achieved on a global scale, with the EU and its member states as obvious pioneers (see SWP Research Paper 08/2020).

Moreover, the Commission is seeking to create new medium-term incentives through its Global Gateway strategy. Based on the G7 decisions of 2021, this initiative is designed to channel financial support to development projects – including climate and energy – in partner countries. The EU institutions and member states have pledged to invest up to €300 billion in these and other policy areas (including digital infrastructure, education, health) by 2027.

On the other hand, international pressure will have to be stepped up on hesitant states. In 2021 the G7 and some members of the G20 worked hard on China, India and Russia. But the EU's toolbox is limited. Talks with important trading partners about the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM; see SWP-Studie 9/2021) could contribute political leverage; from 2026 the CBAM is supposed to impose a CO₂ charge on selected emission-intensive imports to the EU, making them more expensive. Beyond this and financial engagement, however, it will be difficult to generate fresh incentives or leverage to support Egypt's preparations for COP27.

Climate financing remains decisive for productive international cooperation. It should be complemented with targeted programmes investing in decarbonisation, for which the "South Africa deal" offers a good template. The United States needs to be brought on board too; Washington has to date made promises on the international stage, but no national decisions to increase financial aid.

Engagement by European heads of state and government will also be crucial in 2022. High hopes rest on the French Council Presidency in the first half of the year. But they are dampened by the prospect of the French presidential elections in April. Campaigning will strongly constrain Presi-

dent Emmanuel Macron in pursuing European projects. In the second half of the year, when the preparations for COP27 will intensify, a comparably small EU member state – the Czech Republic – will take over the Council Presidency. This will inevitably limit the capacities available for important international EU projects. Additionally, European External Action Service's chronic lack of adequate human resources will hamper its ability to press the EU's climate agenda internationally. After all, the annual COPs place growing demands on Europe's climate policy-makers. International climate diplomacy is all too familiar with the challenge of guiding these ongoing processes towards substantial progress in the UN framework.

All the more will therefore depend on the new German government and its ability to influence global climate cooperation, in particular the expanded role the foreign office intends to play. Germany holds the G7 presidency in 2022, offering opportunities to deepen the G7 – which already constitutes a "climate club" – in the interest of international cooperation. All the G7 states are currently engaged in climate policy, including the United States which will be stepping up its climate diplomacy in 2022. The G7 should increase its efforts to motivate the more hesitant G20 states, which will be led in 2022 by Indonesia. Jakarta will need support for its endeavours to keep China and India, as the biggest G20 members, on board. Individual climate alliances and concrete sectoral initiatives announced at COP26 could foster elevated ambition in the G20. At the same time the Indonesian government will underline its engagement for the developing countries' concerns. Accordingly, the urgent topics in the UN process – climate adaptation, loss and damage, climate financing – will certainly be on the G20-agenda.

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Shiloh Fetzek

[ABOUT SHILOH](#) ▶

Could the Ukraine crisis accelerate a longer-term policy shift away from fossil fuels?

The IPCC's latest warning of the adverse impact of climate change on global security has been largely overshadowed by the Ukraine crisis, explains Shiloh

from fossil fuels?

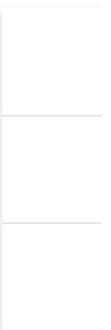


Published four days into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) [latest climate science report](#) on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability was somewhat overshadowed. But dramatic shifts in energy policy in response to the Ukraine crisis may fundamentally change the context in which these reports are read, and may even give cause for optimism that some of the more dangerous changes in the climate that the IPCC projects, and their compounding effects on the security environment, can be avoided by this accelerated shift away from fossil fuels.

Given the situation in Ukraine, the key messages of the report and the implications for security and the strategic environment may not have reverberated as loudly as they might in the news agenda, or in conversations about how to shape long-term strategic planning and security policymaking. There is also a medium- to long-term risk that the immediate crisis in Ukraine crowds out the recent attention and focus on climate threats to the strategic environment and defence energy transition.

IPCC warnings on climate risk and security

The IPCC's work, which assesses and synthesises the scientific literature on climate change into comprehensive reports, has a number of implications for security and the strategic environment. This latest report maps out the likely future impacts of climate change and how the world might adapt, and paints a dramatic picture of changes already underway in the Earth's climate system and those that are around the corner. The IPCC finds that the Earth system is already undergoing profound destabilisation, and is rapidly approaching thresholds and tipping points, beyond which systemic and cascading risks



part of the policy response. But the IPCC report also finds that there are limits to adaptation, and the changes necessary to avoid hitting them need to be preventive and implemented years, if not decades, in advance. This now leaves very little time to transform energy systems and to prepare for a more hazardous climate, and the report details how slim the margin of error now is for implementing effective climate policy.

The implications of climate change for security in a rapidly evolving geostrategic and security environment are significant. Changes in extreme weather, water availability, food availability, human movement and vulnerability, along with all the other systems climate change will touch, will reshape the physical environment, as well as change resource and power dynamics, and can influence drivers of instability and conflict. The domain is changing, across the security spectrum, and defence communities are not yet adequately integrating the IPCC's warnings into policy and planning.

Russia fuelling breakthroughs in the West's energy independence

As well as the physical climate impacts on conflict drivers, the dynamics of repurposing the global energy system to avoid the worst of climate change may come with their own set of geopolitical concerns, and complex interactions with how conflicts play out, as we are seeing in the global responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Although in the short term Europe may need to find other sources of fossil fuels, and may for example delay planned retirements of coal-fired power stations, overall the Ukraine crisis is likely to accelerate a shift to non-fossil-fuel energy sources, further invigorating an ongoing energy transition that has been driven more by cost than climate reasons.

European countries and their allies are clearly recognising the strategic benefits of decarbonising their economies. The entwining of energy-security and national-security concerns is on full display in the European Commission's [announcement](#) that it will accelerate plans to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, starting with Russian gas, as well as EU leaders' [agreement](#) after meeting in Versailles on 11 March to 'phase out its dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal imports as soon as possible'.

These actions would have seemed politically unfeasible even a week ago. The REPowerEU energy strategy was delayed and revised to decrease gas dependence, with the goal of a two-thirds reduction in Russian gas imports this year. The EU will develop a [proposal](#) by mid-May to phase out Russian fossil-fuel dependency entirely by 2027. The US, UK and Australia have announced bans on Russian oil imports, with the [US](#) banning LNG and coal as

strategy, oriented towards renewables and nuclear, with the business, energy and industrial strategy secretary [stating](#): ‘ensuring the UK’s clean energy independence is a matter of national security.’ The new perspectives the Ukraine crisis has brought on energy security and independence, and the strategic value of the energy transition, are unlikely to fade – particularly if higher energy prices decrease the opportunity cost of making this transition.

Energy security and the defence energy transition

Such decisions will have implications that play out over long-term strategic-planning horizons, and interact with the changing landscape of climate impacts laid out by the IPCC. Decarbonisation will likely continue to be on the agenda of militaries around the world, for strategic as well as climate-mitigation reasons – such as reducing logistics vulnerabilities. Closer defence cooperation in the context of reducing reliance on a petrostate could accelerate the greening of NATO and European militaries. Countries such as Germany, which have committed to increasing defence spending, will likely be guided by the [EU Climate and Defence Roadmap](#), as well as NATO’s efforts around climate resilience and the defence energy transition.

However, as the invasion of Ukraine clearly demonstrates, conventional capabilities still matter, and militaries will need to use fossil fuels to move anything heavy in theatre, as ‘green’ alternative technologies have yet to be developed. More unified preparation for a less certain security future among NATO and its allies might result in prioritising R&D to support the defence energy transition.

Regardless of decarbonisation push, climate-change disruption is certain

The IPCC report may have become somewhat lost in the news agenda as events unfolded in Ukraine. But amid significant uncertainty about the evolving geostrategic environment, the IPCC’s work provides sound information about the physical conditions and changing Earth system of the future. We do not yet know whether the international system will be strengthened or weakened by current events to deal with these challenges, but scientists are clear that climate change will bring significant disruption, whatever we now do.

Ukraine also shows us that difficult decisions can be taken quickly in the face of a crisis, and that countries can still act together to address complex and dangerous situations. This might provide some grounds for optimism, but how these different factors play out remains to be seen.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Why Climate Policy Has Failed

And How Governments Can Do Better

BY WILLIAM NORDHAUS

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Editor's Note: This essay draws on a keynote address, offering an economic perspective on current climate trends and policy recommendations, delivered to G-20 foreign ministers and central bank governors gathered in Venice in July 2021.

The world is witnessing an alarming outbreak of weather disasters—giant wildfires, deadly heat waves, powerful hurricanes, and 1,000-year floods. There can be little doubt that this is only the beginning of the grim toll that climate change will take in the years ahead. Today, the central question is whether our political systems can catch up with the geophysical realities that threaten our lives and livelihoods. As world leaders struggle to design and adopt policies that can slow the pace of warming and mitigate its consequences, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, this November will be an important test.

How do we evaluate the success of past climate policies? The best indicator is carbon intensity, which is a measure of carbon dioxide emissions divided by global real GDP. Figure 1 displays the levels of carbon intensity between 1990 and 2019. There are small fluctuations in the annual changes, but the trend is basically a straight line showing a decline of 1.8 percent per year.

Why is this important? The central goal of climate policies is to bend the emission curve downward. Yet even with all of the international agreements of the last three decades—the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, the Copenhagen accord of 2009, and the Paris climate accord of 2015, along with 25 conferences of the parties—over the same period the rate of decarbonization has remained unchanged.

Why has there been so little progress? To begin with, the price of carbon dioxide emissions across the world is essentially zero, so there is no real market incentive to decarbonize. Second, our economies suffer from inadequate investment in low-carbon technologies because of misaligned innovation incentives. Finally, the entire structure of international policy is hampered by the syndrome of free-riding. Countries rely on others to act, a tendency that undermines the strength of climate agreements. Given these three problems, it cannot be a surprise that the world has made so little headway in slowing climate change.

Climate policy today must address all of these failures. A successful strategy must include three mutually reinforcing components: universal carbon pricing, robust government support for low-carbon technologies, and a new architecture for international climate agreements. Every pillar is necessary if the world is to stand a chance of meeting its climate objectives.

THE PATH TO TWO DEGREES

The internationally agreed climate target is to limit the global temperature increase to two degrees Celsius. Looking forward, what is necessary to attain that objective? Consider three scenarios. The top line in Figure 2 assumes no change to climate policy. With the current (minimal) policies in place at both the national and international levels, emissions of carbon dioxide equivalent (carbon dioxide plus other gases that produce warming effects) are projected to increase roughly one percent per year over the next five decades—trending up, not down.

The next scenario, shown at the bottom of Figure 2, is one in which the world meets the two-degree target. To stay on this path, emissions must decline sharply and immediately. Whereas current policies will result in a rise in emissions of almost 25 percent between 2015 and 2030, the two-degree path requires a decline of 30 percent by 2030 and reaches zero emissions shortly after midcentury.

Finally, consider the path of emissions under the Paris accord, shown in the middle line in Figure 2. Emission estimates through 2030 reflect actual national commitments, while those after 2030 are projections assuming countries continue to deepen their commitments at the same pace as during the period between 2015 and 2030. The emission trajectory under the Paris accord is virtually flat, rising three percent from 2015 to 2030 and then declining slightly after that. Of course, these projections assume that the Paris commitments are actually fulfilled.

The main takeaway is that meeting the two-degree target cannot happen without an immediate and steep drop in emissions. Even if all countries meet their Paris objectives, that will reduce emissions only a fraction of the necessary amount.

We should recognize that some countries have moved beyond Paris in their domestic commitments. Many are aiming for zero net emissions by midcentury or shortly thereafter. These are soft commitments, however, lacking a binding international agreement and the actual policy mechanisms that will be necessary for implementation. The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden, for example, has promised deep emission reductions but has not put policies in place to meet those promises—no carbon pricing, no major increase in energy research, and no proposals to retool international agreements.

There is a vast chasm between aspirations and policies. Economic studies indicate that there are three steps countries can take to bridge the gap: price carbon emissions, promote low-carbon technologies, and improve the architecture of international climate accords.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CARBON PRICING

The single most important step to achieve climate objectives is to put a market price on the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, such as methane. For succinctness, this is commonly referred to as a price on carbon. The fundamental economic logic is that raising the price of a good reduces consumption—whether that good is cigarettes, gasoline, alcohol, or emissions. A high carbon price is necessary if we are to change the behavior of thousands of local and national governments, millions of companies, and billions of consumers.

The power of carbon prices can be explained with the example of using coal for electricity generation. When burned, one ton of coal emits close to three tons of carbon dioxide. If the government levies \$50 per ton of carbon dioxide emitted, this will add approximately \$140 per ton to the price of coal. This will more than double the cost of coal-fired electricity. Producers

would have a strong incentive to transition away from coal in favor of low-carbon fuels (such as natural gas) or renewable technologies (such as wind, solar, and nuclear power).

Other sectors will feel a smaller impact. A \$50 carbon price would add \$230 per year to the cost of driving a gasoline-powered car but only \$1 to the average household's annual cost of banking services. Across the economy, carbon prices tilt the playing field against emissions. The higher the price, the steeper the tilt.

A second point, which is less obvious, is that the carbon price needs to be equal across countries and sectors. It won't do for some sectors, such as motor fuels, to have astronomical carbon prices while other sectors, such as electricity or aluminum production, have low ones. Harmonizing prices allows the world to attain its climate objectives at minimum cost.

Calculations suggest that placing the burden of reductions on only half of all countries or half of all sectors will at least double that cost.

How high a carbon price is necessary? Estimates of the "social cost of carbon"—which calculates global economic damage per ton of emissions—would suggest a price of around \$50 per ton in 2021, rising to \$85 per ton in 2050.

This price is unlikely to attain the two-degree objective or the target of zero net emissions by 2050, however. Doing either would require much higher prices. I estimate that these ambitious targets would require carbon prices of \$300 to \$500 per ton in 2030, rising as high as \$1,000 per ton by 2050. But the estimates from different models vary widely because the technologies needed to reach zero emissions are still speculative.

In reality, carbon emission prices and the regimes under which they operate are completely inadequate. According to World Bank calculations, in 2019 the average global price was about \$2 per ton of carbon dioxide. This is not even in the same universe as what is necessary. Low carbon prices are one reason why climate policies have been so ineffective.

There are dozens of carbon pricing plans in place in different regions of the world, each setting its own price and varying in terms of the share of the region's emissions that are covered by the regime. The largest is the European Union Emissions Trading System (ETS), which operates as a multinational carbon trading scheme. Even the ETS, as impressive as it is, has two flaws. One problem is that the price is so volatile: it has varied from \$4 to \$75 per ton of carbon dioxide over the last decade. More important, the ETS covers only a fraction of the European Union's economy—slightly less than half. Other regional carbon pricing regimes, such as the California cap and trade system, have a very high coverage rate but a very low tax. Still other systems, such as those of Sweden and Switzerland, have very high prices but very low coverage.

The policy necessary to meet international climate objectives looks very different from any regime currently in operation. It needs to have the price adopted by Sweden or Switzerland and the coverage rate of California—something like a price of \$100 per ton of carbon dioxide and close to 100 percent coverage. High and harmonized carbon prices are key to climate change policy, but those that exist today tend to be low and fragmented.

GREEN R & D

Governments must also increase their support for low-carbon technologies. Just as countries used extraordinary incentives to develop COVID-19

vaccines in record time, we need to use all our ingenuity to accelerate the development of low-carbon technologies.

The reason for the urgency is that moving to a low- or zero-carbon global economy will require replacing large parts of our energy infrastructure and/or developing brand-new carbon-removal technologies. Fossil fuels accounted for 84 percent of the world's primary energy consumption in 2019. By a rough estimate, it will take on the order of \$100 trillion to \$300 trillion in new capital to reach zero net emissions over the next four decades. And much of that new capital must come in the form of technologies that are largely unproven or immature today. Research and development is urgently needed to make this possible.

Why is government support necessary? From an economic point of view, R & D suffers from a severe externality in the same way that climate change does. The public returns on green innovation are much larger than the private returns. Indeed, there is a double externality for low-carbon R & D. Green inventors get only a small fraction of the returns on their innovations to begin with, and then the low prices of emissions exacerbate the problem.

Carbon capture and sequestration provides a good example of this double externality. Economic returns on the research and commercialization of CCS spill over to other firms and future consumers. But the captured carbon is worthless in most countries because carbon emissions are drastically underpriced, which makes investments in CCS commercially nonviable—and therefore out of the question in corporate boardrooms.

The same logic holds for advanced nuclear power, fusion power, and the burgeoning hydrogen economy: none of them have any advantage over fossil fuels as long as carbon prices remain low. Hydrogen will never be the energy carrier of the future when carbon prices are \$2 per ton.

It should be emphasized that the primary requirement is support for *research and development*, not production. Developing new low-carbon technologies and energy sources is much more important than subsidizing the current generation of low-carbon equipment in cars, houses, and industry.

The U.S. government's research budget today reveals misplaced national priorities. In 2019, federal R & D spending on military systems—such as aircraft, drones, artificial intelligence, robots, and nuclear weapons—totaled \$60 billion. By contrast, advanced energy and renewables received only \$2 billion in government R & D funding. While there may be political logic to this disparity, there is no societal logic to the imbalance given the climate threats the world faces in the coming years.

THE CLIMATE CLUB

Why have landmark international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris accord failed to make a dent in emission trends? The reason is *free-riding*—countries neglect to do their part, putting their national interests over global interests. A country displaying this syndrome might say not just “America first” but “America only.” Nationalist policies that maximize one state's interests at the expense of others—beggar-thy-neighbor policies—are a poor way to resolve global problems.

Noncooperative approaches to issues as diverse as tariffs, ocean fisheries, war, outer space, and climate change lead to outcomes that leave most or all nations worse off. The result of pervasive free-riding is that international climate policy has reached a dead end.

The fatal flaw in the 25 UN conferences leading up to Glasgow is that they are essentially voluntary. Countries may agree to take action, but there are no repercussions if they withdraw from the accords or fail to keep their commitments. When the United States dropped out of the Kyoto Protocol,

there were no penalties. In every climate agreement to date, there have been no penalties for nonparticipation or for breaking promises. Voluntary climate change treaties produce very limited emission reductions—this is the lesson of both history and economic theory, and it is validated by the three-decade decarbonization trend shown in Figure 1.

One proposal to combat free-riding in climate treaties is what I have called a “climate club.” Scholars who study *effective* international agreements find they include sticks as well as carrots—that is, they set penalties for nonparticipants and rule breakers. Trade treaties and the World Trade Organization system epitomize such an approach. They require countries to make costly commitments that serve the collective interest, but they also penalize countries that do not keep their commitments.

This could be a template for an effective climate agreement. Take an example that we have modeled at Yale and that has been studied at other universities. Suppose a climate club agrees to establish a minimum target carbon price. Under club rules, countries would be required to impose a minimum domestic carbon price, say, \$50 per ton of carbon dioxide, that rises over time. The implementation mechanism may vary by country—a government could decide to use a cap and trade or a carbon tax, for instance—and each country would keep its own revenues.

The new feature—and the key difference from existing climate agreements—is a penalty for nonparticipants and countries that fail to meet their obligations. In our analysis, this takes the form of a uniform tariff increase. Such a penalty is simple to administer and serves as a powerful incentive. Our modeling suggests that a carbon price of \$50 per ton plus a uniform tariff penalty of three to five percent would be sufficient to induce strong participation in a climate club. Other projections have also found that the

club can succeed in bringing most countries onboard if its initial members include key players, specifically China, the United States, and the European Union.

THE RIGHT POLICY MIX

The world has made little progress in slowing global warming. Even with all the policies implemented over the last three decades, the rate of global decarbonization is unchanged. If we hope to meet our climate objectives, we must enact a swift and sharp downturn in emissions.

An effective policy must introduce high carbon prices, harmonized across countries and across sectors. Actual carbon prices are virtually zero today; they should immediately increase to around \$50 per ton of carbon dioxide and rise steeply after that. High emission prices will help remedy the problem of underinvestment in low-carbon technologies, but governments must provide additional support. Right now, countries severely neglect the fundamental energy research and development that will make possible a low- or zero-carbon economy. Finally, coordinating effective international policies will require some kind of club structure—an agreement that uses both carrots and sticks to induce countries to implement critical reforms.

High carbon prices combined with investment in low-carbon technologies and international participation in a climate club—this is the mix of policies we need to meet our ambitious objectives.

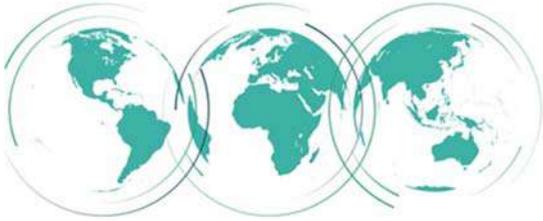
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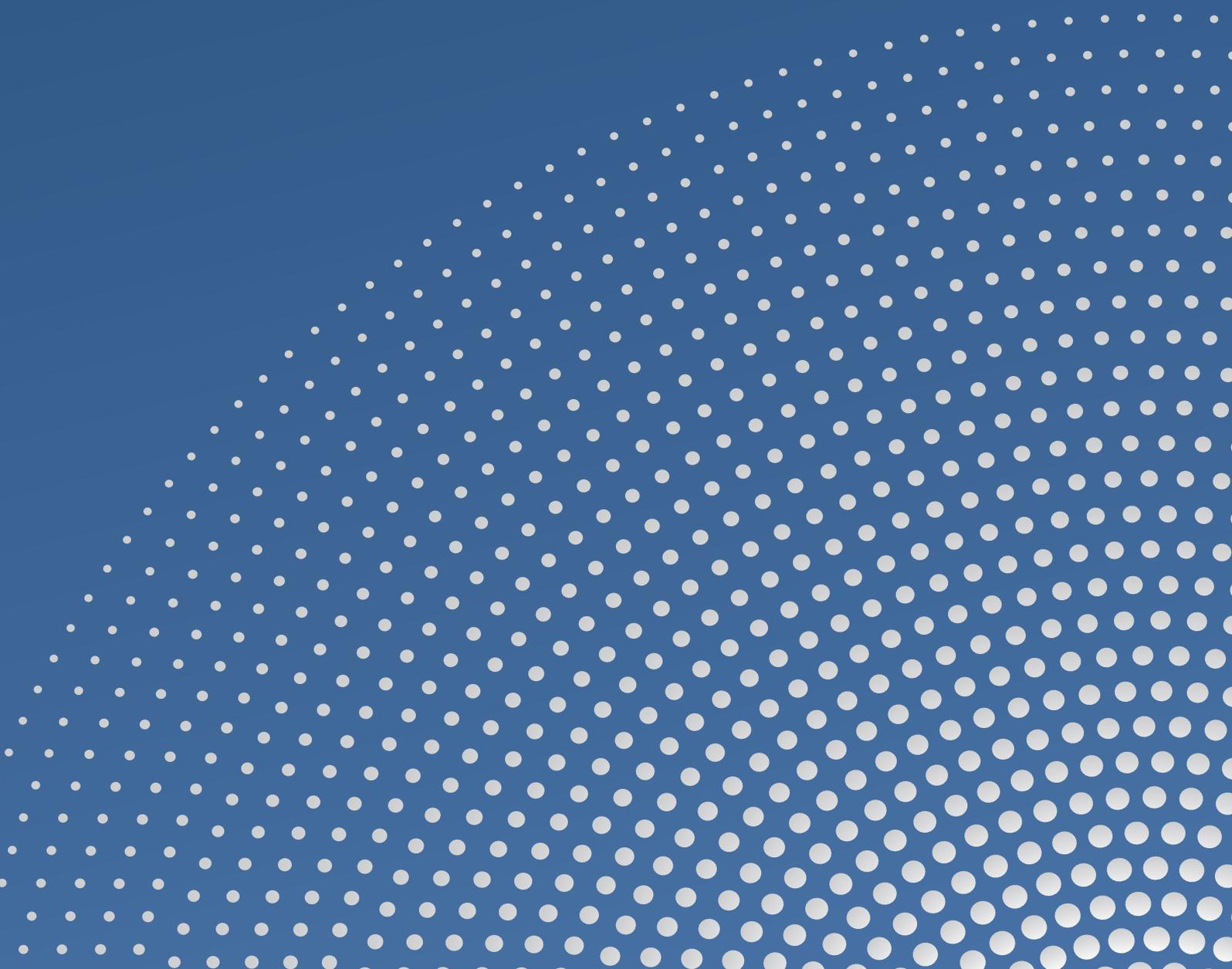
The Fate of Democracy



Policy paper

From Democracy Summit to Global Democratic Agenda?

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Introduction

The decision of the US administration to hold a Summit for Democracy has enlivened debates about international democracy support. A virtual summit in December 2021 will lead to a year of follow-up initiatives and then an in-person summit in late 2022. Some observers are skeptical about this new process, while others see a chance to shape a more effective global democratic agenda. Whether the outcome is positive or inconsequential will depend on how multiple actors influence the process in the months ahead.

There are many aspects of the summit process that remain open for debate and will need to be resolved. This policy brief focuses on one very specific element: the question of how the involvement of Asian, African, and Latin American democracies can best be encouraged and ensured. Keen to signal its return to supporting democratic values internationally, the US proposed and has led the summit preparations. Other democracies have both welcomed this lead and expressed some unease. A key question is whether democratic countries other than the US will engage fully with the process.

If they are to do so, they will need genuine influence over shaping a fully global approach to democracy support. In return, democratic countries will need to upgrade their own so-far tepid and ultra-cautious approaches to democracy support, as well as tackle their internal democracy shortcomings. We offer five ideas for how this bargain might be taken forward, both making the longer-term summit process more genuinely global and galvanizing non-Western democracies into more meaningful commitments to supporting democratic values internationally. The process's regional and non-governmental dimensions will be of particular importance in this regard.

Non-Western Democracy Policies

Even though democracies outside the US and Europe do not have the same kind of formally structured “democracy promotion” or “democracy support” policies as do Western powers, many of their external funding and diplomatic initiatives have come to incorporate elements that are relevant to the democracy agenda. Yet, these countries have generally failed to develop any significant effort to shore up global democratic values against today’s authoritarian surge.

Japan has upgraded its discursive commitment to liberal values since the mid-2000s and formally supported the norms and values of democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule-based order. Relevant policy initiatives to this end include the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept, its bilateral security agreements with other democracies such as India and Australia, and multilateral agreements with other democracies such as the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement. Its National Security Strategy, as well as the Economic Cooperation Charter, also underscores Japan’s commitment to strengthening the international order based on universal values and rules.

When it comes to implementing those commitments in its foreign aid, however, Japan’s approach has been more nuanced and restrained. Instead of bringing the political terms of “democracy” and “human rights” to the forefront of its foreign aid, the country has focused on the values associated with good governance, such as openness, transparency, economic efficiency, and financial health of target countries. This is to avoid giving the impression that Japan’s foreign policy is a containment strategy against China while still promoting these values of good and democratic governance for the stability of the liberal international order.

South Korea has not integrated democracy support in its foreign policy goals, in large part as overt “democracy promotion” sounds like an intervention into other countries’ domestic politics. Only on a piecemeal basis has it in recent years stepped up several relevant commitments. It contributed 1.38 billion US dollars to the UN Democracy Fund from 2006 to 2020. The Korean foreign aid agency has supported developing countries’ public administration reform as a type of governance support, particularly around the SDG 16 goal. South Korea also launched the Association of World Election Bodies (A-Web) to assist elections in developing countries. The country also took an unprecedented step in imposing government sanctions against the Myanmar military after the military coup in 2021. Korean civil society organizations have been running projects with populations displaced by the return of autocratic regimes in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

In India, Prime Minister Modi’s government has pursued a foreign policy that preferentially engages or supports fellow democracies. This is mainly driven by Indian concerns about China’s growing political influence in Asia. Modi strongly and routinely emphasizes India’s democracy as the key to its global identity. He stresses the democratic elements of India’s economic assistance abroad, for [example](#) most recently in opening Mauritius’ new Supreme Court building that was supported by Indian funding. India has revived its financial [support](#) for the UN Democracy Fund and participation in Community of Democracies ministerial meetings. It uses increasingly clear pro-democracy language in joint diplomatic statements such as the Quad or the EU-India summit. Of course, Indian democracy is facing significant challenges internally, which often sit uneasily with these external commitments.

In Africa, democratic states pushed for adopting the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) in 2007 and have since used this normative framework to support

improvements in governance and democratic norms across the continent. Still, countries' unwillingness to establish effective implementation and enforcement mechanisms has often undermined the credibility of the African Union (AU) in taking forward the Charter. A demand for democratic, legitimate, accountable, and representative governance has been growing in Africa. Hollow performative elections have supplanted substantive democratic practice and contributed to a growing democratic disillusionment. Given this, democratic states have sought to mobilize the distinctive regional institutional architecture as a tool for democracy support across Africa. As yet, these structures have had little impact in reversing negative democratic trends in the region.

Latin American democracies express interest in democracy support, but this agenda has got caught up in the region's fraught division between leftist and right-wing governments. The adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001 fed expectations that Latin American democracies would adopt a strong defense of democratic practices in the region. But the region's democracies declined to invoke the charter against democratic backsliding observed in Venezuela and Nicaragua. Though the Charter is still in place, and some countries have more recently attempted to invoke it to address the problems in Venezuela and Nicaragua, left-wing democratic governments balk at condemning democratic backsliding in these countries led by leftist regimes. Other countries, like El Salvador, led by right-wing authoritarian populists, feel that they can also get away with their anti-democratic practices as long as their behavior is not as evidently anti-democratic as that of Venezuela and Nicaragua, the worst offenders. All this has dented expectations of cross-border democracy support gaining ground in Latin America.

Positions on the Summit

Non-Western democracies will participate in the summit with differing degrees of enthusiasm and with strategic caveats. While broadly keen on the prospect of coordination among democracies, these countries have not been entirely reassured by the pre-summit preparations and harbor some misgivings about what kind of processes emerge after the December kick-off meeting.

South Korea has been relatively enthusiastic about the summit. The country was invited to the 2021 G7 summit in the UK largely due to wide international recognition of its democratic performance. South Korea has been keen on cooperation with other democracies for many years. Nevertheless, the Korean government is concerned about the US using the summit as an anti-China alliance and is more comfortable with democracy cooperation of a more functional kind that contributes to managing the pandemic, gender issues, anti-corruption, and green technology. Despite its concerns, the South Korean government is likely to be supportive of the US, not least since it needs the Biden administration's cooperation in dealing with North Korea and other national security issues.

The Indian government has engaged with the summit process, even though the fact that the summit is being hosted by the United States to some degrees lessens its enthusiasm. India is keen to use the democracy narrative principally to demarcate India strategically from China and present an alternative model of governance to other developing democracies – and sees the summit through this lens. India will not participate as enthusiastically as many others, and to allay sensitivities Narendra Modi will be looking for Western acknowledgment of India's native roots of democracy and a narrative centered on the equal validity of different democratic models.

Japan has a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the summit. It did not actively lobby for such an initiative in Washington, D.C.. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has left summit-related matters to the relatively small and marginal Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division. Japan does not want the summit to be an exclusive democracy grouping, mainly for fear that the US would exclude some Southeast Asian countries of strategic importance to Japan. Japan has generally welcomed a big-tent approach, including prominent involvement from civil society rather than the process being a purely government-led geostrategic initiative.

Despite recent reversals, Africa is still likely to be the most represented continent at the summit – in terms of participating states. The bigger states like Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya, as well as the smaller ones, such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mauritius, are set to engage with the process. However, many of these countries are suffering severe democratic backsliding and will be participating mainly with an eye to reaping the economic advantages of belonging to the wealthy club of democracies. Governments may use such favorable economic positioning to undermine domestic democratic competition. From Africa, it may be the inclusion of civil society voices that bring the most enthusiastic and enriching contribution.

Unsurprisingly, all the non-Western democracies express concerns about the process that takes shape after the first summit. They will not want it to be seen as a process led heavy-handedly by Western, developed countries in accordance with their own democratic templates. The more equality there is between democracies, the more fully they are likely to participate in follow-up initiatives. Most of these countries are hesitant about any heavy institutional formalization of new coordination among democracies – they are not likely to be keen on a formal charter, large secretariat, formal entry criteria, rigid rules of participation, and the likes. Most strikingly, all are uneasy about a process of democratic coordination being molded around the US's judgments of other states' democratic credentials and its own geostrategic interests. While broadly positive towards international cooperation on democracy, they will not want to be associated with any new democratic interventionism.

Five Ideas for Non-Western Leads

Against this backdrop, five sets of ideas or guidelines could be useful in enticing non-Western democracies into full engagement with the new process. These five proposals reflect concerns that it will be vital that the Western powers take on board if they want to see a genuinely global democratic agenda take shape. And they will equally require non-Western states dramatically to strengthen their own commitments to democracy.

■ 1. Functional and flexible clusters

Non-Western democracies are more likely to buy into new democratic coordination if it is organized around functional clusters. They could then be encouraged – indeed, prompted – to take the lead on certain sectoral challenges, run through flexible forums that states voluntarily opt into. Some US policymakers have expressed interest in this kind of functional approach. Yet, for now, it is the US that has set the agenda around three thematic clusters (defending against authoritarianism, corruption, and human rights) that may exclude issues of equal importance to other democracies. The functional logic could be given a much stronger push in 2022. Themes could include electoral and parliamentary processes, data privacy, regulating tech, state-led propaganda, digital tools to empower civil society, and education for democracy. A collection of such plurilateral alliances, differing in membership

across different issues, is more likely to gain broad support beyond the West than any impression of a single “concert of democracies” type structure.

■ 2. Regional frameworks

In a similar vein, the summit process could usefully be broken into regional clusters as a way of strengthening the buy-in and commitment of non-Western democracies. These regional clusters might include Latin and Central America, the Indian Ocean region, Indo-Pacific, Africa, or South-South/G77 democracies.

Existing inter-governmental regional frameworks in Asia include the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter of Democracy and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (that emphasizes shared universal values and the maintenance of the rules-based order). Still, none of these have done much to support civil liberties in the region, and none have installed practical mechanisms to protect and promote democracy. Indeed, Asia is almost the only region that does not have a pan-regional framework that can be used to defend democracies. Given that Asian governments are comfortable with multilateral approaches to democracy support, but not with bilateral approaches, regional mechanisms would have the potential to shore-up democratic norms. The regional focus could make sense as the challenges are different across regions; in some regimes are canceling elections and tampering with election results, in others democratic backsliding is led by democratically elected leaders. In Latin America, tackling inequality needs a specific effort; also, in this region opposition forces need to be engaged, not just civil society.

■ 3. The China factor

Non-Western democracies are most concerned that the process will become too hostile towards China – although India certainly is keen to generate stronger pressure on China. If the US is genuine about co-ownership of post-summit follow-up, the non-Western democracies could and should take the lead on this issue. They will need to map policy options that, on the one hand, avoid new pro-democratic coordination from being seen as an anti-China mechanism, while on the other hand addressing Chinese human rights abuses within and beyond its borders and showing that democracies can deal with global challenges more effectively than autocracies. Asian democracies are cautious in addressing abuses inside China but are more supportive of mobilizing a common democratic community against China’s coercive tactics outside its borders.

■ 4. Non-governmental track

More engagement from civil society networks is needed to push governments and international organizations to prioritize global democratic renewal. The non-Western democracies are all keen on there being a strong civil society dimension to post-summit processes. They could and should be invited to take the lead in overseeing this strand. A kind of “track 1.5” ethos could be developed. Several initiatives already exist, like the Bali Democracy Forum and a D10 grouping of foreign ministers, as well as programs such as the [Sunnylands Initiative](#) – a collaboration between US and Asian civil society actors. These could be taken much further and made more directly relevant to operational democracy support. Particularly African civil society has been pushing to be fully involved and calling for a long-term process, measured expectations and a genuinely equal partnership between

both north and south, and governments and civic actors. Western civil society actors would need to buy into this kind of “track 1.5” to give a global flavor to civil society initiatives after the summit. An initiative through Forum 2000 could help in this regard.

■ 5. A “reversed gaze” track

The new process must include a willingness from Western, developed democracies to learn from actors in other democracies about their experiences in combatting illiberalism, running elections, managing diversity, using inclusive digital tools for development, data privacy, and tech regulation. A body or forum should be created specifically to offer advice and ideas from non-Western democracies on how Western democracies should address the parlous state of their own democratic politics.

Conclusion

To conclude, if the summit process is to become fully global and generate long-term policy content, a quid-pro-quo will be needed. On the one hand, the US and other Western states will need to relinquish control and be open to non-Western powers’ concerns and ideas if they want others to participate fully. On the other hand, if offered such agenda-setting opportunities, these non-Western democracies will, in turn, need to step up and contribute rather than simply expressing misgivings from the sidelines.

If they do not want it to be a US- or Western-led process, these states need to seize the opportunity to develop their own ideas and increase their own commitment to defending democratic values globally. Apart from the long-term thematic areas suggested above, a more immediate signal would be for participants in December’s virtual summit to agree to hold the next summit in a non-Western democracy. So far, the emerging summit process does not meet the magnitude of challenges facing global democracy. Neither Western nor non-Western states have yet stepped up to offer the kind of strategies and commitment capable of making a tangible difference. If the summit process is to move beyond the cosmetic, both groups of states need to move up many gears and work together in a spirit of co-ownership and resolve.

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As democratic nations have wrestled with economic, social and geopolitical upheaval in recent years, the future of liberal democracy has come into question. In countries across the globe, democratic norms and civil liberties have deteriorated, while populists have enjoyed surprising success at the ballot box. Newly democratic nations have struggled, while more-established, once self-assured democracies have stumbled, exposing long-simmering weaknesses in their social fabrics and institutional designs.

These trends have been well-documented by organizations such as the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#), [Freedom House](#), [International IDEA](#) and the [Varieties of Democracy project](#) (V-Dem), which measure and track the quality of democracy around the world. Public opinion researchers have also focused on these issues by examining how citizens think about democracy and its alternatives. At Pew Research Center, we've applied a comparative, cross-national lens to explore global trends in attitudes toward political representation and individual rights.

How we did this

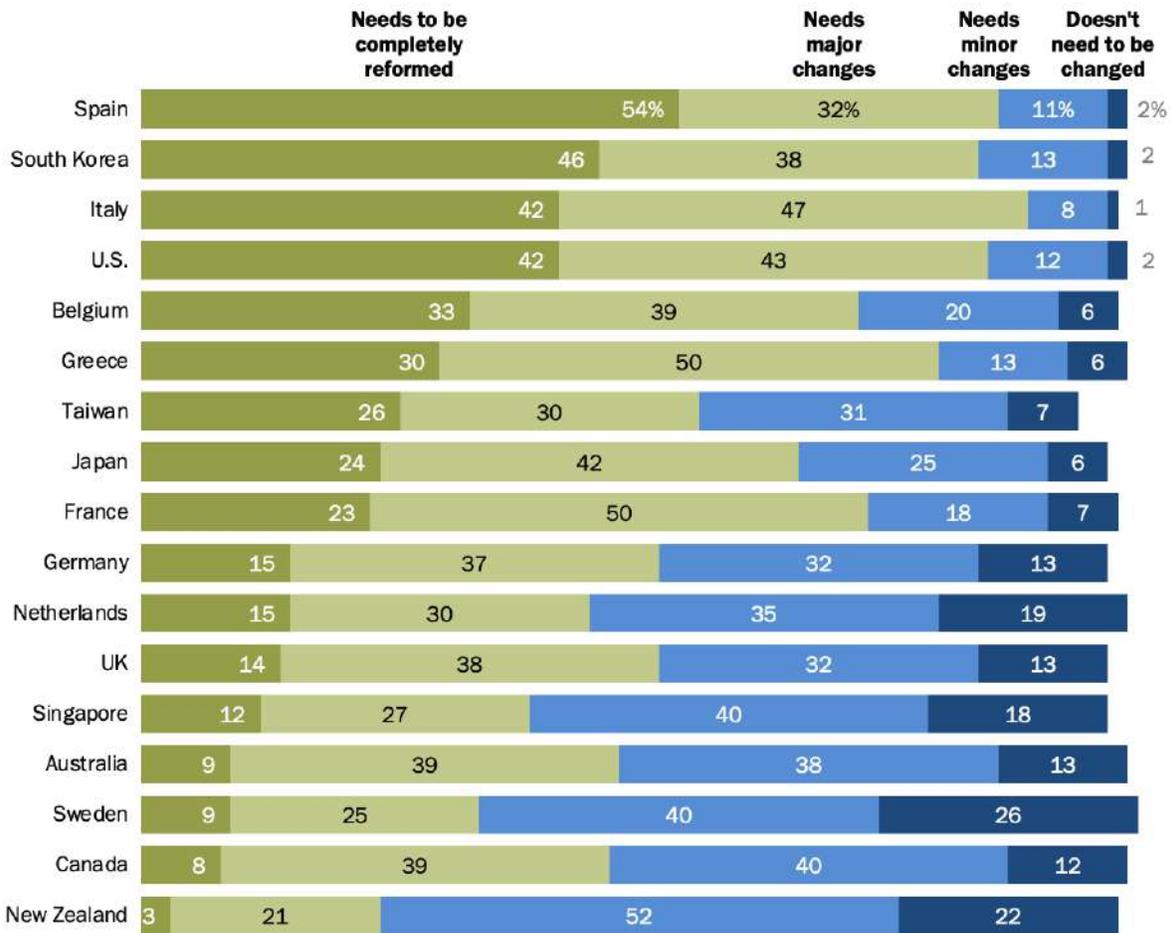
Our international surveys reveal four key insights into how citizens think about democratic governance: For many, democracy is not delivering; people like democracy, but their commitment to it is often not very strong; political and social divisions are amplifying the challenges of contemporary democracy; and people want a stronger public voice in politics and policymaking.

For many, democracy is not delivering

In part, the current moment of anxiety about liberal democracy is linked to frustration with how democratic societies are functioning. Pew Research Center surveys have consistently found large shares of the public in many countries saying [they are dissatisfied](#) with the way their democracy is working. And for many, this dissatisfaction is leading to a desire for political change. A median of 56% across 17 advanced economies [surveyed in 2021](#) say their political system needs major changes or needs to be completely reformed. Roughly two-thirds or more express this opinion in Italy, Spain, the U.S., South Korea, Greece, France, Belgium and Japan.

Large shares in many publics say their political system needs reform

% who say the political system in (survey public) ...



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey, Q13c.

"Citizens in Advanced Economies Want Significant Changes to Their Political Systems"

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Even where the demand for significant political reform is relatively low, substantial minorities want at least minor changes. In all of the publics surveyed, fewer than three-in-ten say the political system should not be changed at all.

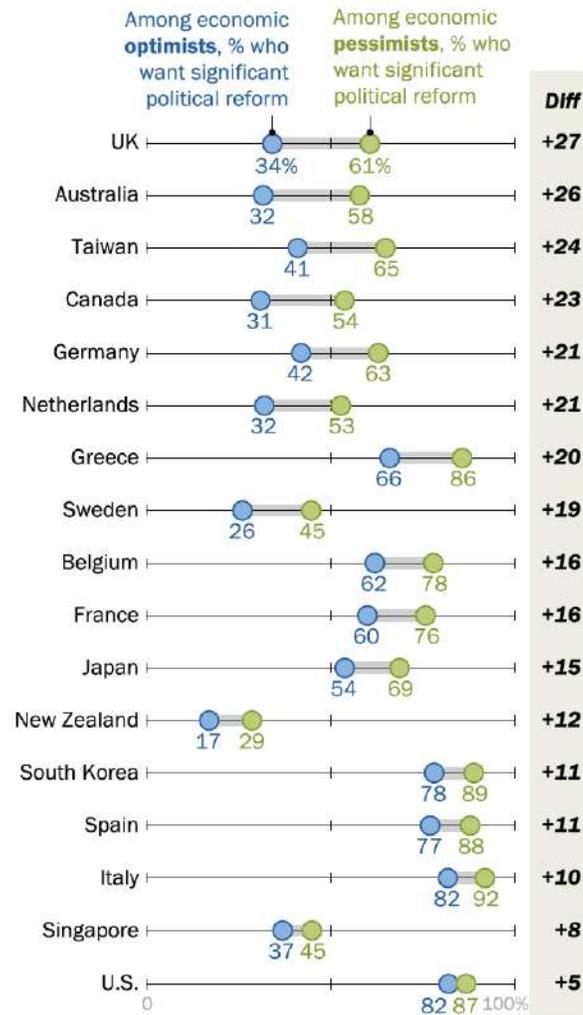
However, there is widespread skepticism about the prospect for change. In eight of the 17 publics, roughly half or more of those polled say the political system needs major changes or a complete overhaul *and* say they have little or no confidence the system can be changed effectively.

This discontent and disillusionment with the political status quo is tied to many factors, including economic performance, governmental competence and the overall fairness of the political and economic system. Our research over time has shown that when people think their countries are performing poorly on these dimensions, confidence in democracy often slips.

Over the past decade and a half, people around the world have experienced a global financial crisis and more recently a pandemic-driven global downturn. Many have grown pessimistic about the long-term economic future, and our data has illustrated how economic pessimism feeds dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working and weakens commitment to democratic values.

In 2019, we [analyzed data](#) from 27 countries to better understand what was driving dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working. We found that the [strongest predictor](#) of being *dissatisfied* was being unhappy with the current state of the national economy. Another significant predictor was how someone feels about economic opportunity. People who said the statement “most people have a good chance to improve their standard of living” did *not* describe their country well were more likely to be dissatisfied with the way democracy is functioning.

Economic pessimists see greater need for political reform



Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. Economic optimists are those that say children today will be better off financially than their parents. Economic pessimists say children today will be worse off financially than their parents.
 Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey, Q13c.
 "Citizens in Advanced Economies Want Significant Changes to Their Political Systems"

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The economic prospects for the next generation also matter. In the survey we conducted across 17 advanced economies in spring 2021, dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working was much more common among people who expect that when children in their country today grow up, they will be worse off financially than their parents. The economic pessimists are also especially likely to think their country's political system needs major changes or needs to be completely reformed. For example, in the United Kingdom, 61% of respondents who are pessimistic about the next generation's financial prospects think their country needs significant political reform, compared with just 34% among those who are optimistic that the next generation will do better financially than their parents.

The same survey highlighted the impact the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has had on attitudes toward democracy. People who believe their country is doing a poor job of dealing with the pandemic are consistently more likely to say they are dissatisfied with the way their democracy is working and that they want significant changes to the political system. For instance, 73% of Germans who feel their country is handling the crisis poorly say they believe their political system needs major changes or should be completely overhauled, while just 32% of those who think the country is handling it well express this view.

Beyond the state of economy and public health, opinions about whether countries are living up to basic principles of fairness and justice affect how people feel about the political system. Are political elites, for example, able to manipulate the system to their own advantage? In many countries, large shares of the public say yes. Across [27 nations we polled in 2018](#), a median of 54% said that most politicians in their country are corrupt. This sentiment was especially high in Greece (89%) and Russia (82%). When we asked Americans a similar question in [the fall of 2020](#), two-thirds said most politicians are corrupt.

Perceptions of fairness, or unfairness, in the judicial system also shape how people feel about their democracy. In our [2018 survey](#), for example, 68% of Hungarians who felt the court system in their country did not treat everyone fairly were dissatisfied with democracy. Only 32% of those who said they had a fair judiciary were similarly dissatisfied.

Just as people want their individual rights respected within the judicial system, they want their fundamental rights respected in the arena of public debate. In our [2018 international survey](#), people mostly said they had freedom of speech in their country; however, those who said they did not have it were significantly more likely to be unhappy with the way their democracy is working.

Mixed assessments three decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall

To mark the 30th anniversary of the collapse of communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall, Pew Research Center conducted a survey that highlighted the gap between what citizens want from democracy and what they actually see happening in their countries. It found that democracy is popular today in Central and Eastern European nations that for decades had to endure its main competitor throughout the Cold War, Soviet-style communism. But citizens in these nations nonetheless had strong criticisms and deep disappointments about the post-communist era.

When we asked people in nine former Eastern Bloc nations whether they approve of the shift their countries made to multiparty democracy, they largely said yes, although significant minorities said no, including more than one-third in Bulgaria and Ukraine. Majorities of Bulgarians and Ukrainians said the economic situation for most people was actually better under communism. And even in countries with

much more positive assessments of the transition to democracy and capitalism, there are concerns about certain impacts of this transition. Roughly four-in-ten or more across these nations say the changes since the fall of communism have had a negative influence on health care, law and order, and family values.

Many also thought politicians and business people benefited more than ordinary people when their countries moved to a multiparty system and a market economy. A median of 89% said politicians benefited a great deal or a fair amount from the changes in their country, 80% said the same of business people, but only 41% believed ordinary people benefited from these changes.

In 2019, most in former Eastern Bloc approved of changing to multiparty and free market systems

% who approve/disapprove of the change to a multiparty system/market economy



* Respondents in areas corresponding to former German Democratic Republic.

Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15a,b,e. Q16a-c.

"European Public Opinion Three Decades After the Fall of Communism"

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People like democracy, but their commitment to it is often not very strong

Broadly speaking, democracy is a popular idea. When asked about it, people generally say it's a good way to govern. However, enthusiasm for it as a political system, and for specific democratic rights and institutions, is often tepid. This lack of commitment, which is driven in part by the frustration many feel about the functioning of democracy, may be one

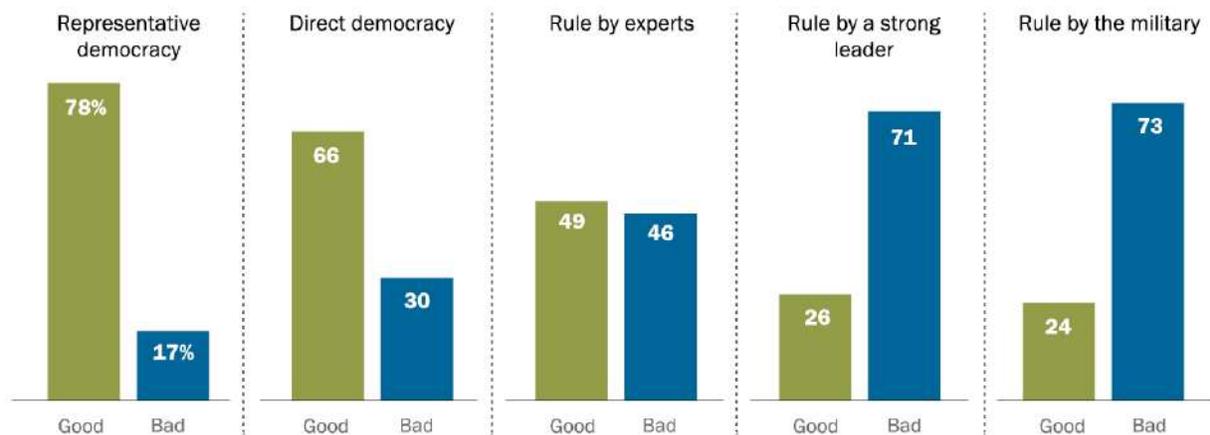
reason some would-be autocrats and political entrepreneurs have been able to bend the rules and norms of liberal democracy with relatively few consequences.

As a [2017 Pew Research Center survey](#) demonstrates, people in regions around the world broadly embrace representative democracy. A median of 78% across the 38 nations polled said that “a democratic system where representatives elected by citizens decide what becomes law” is a very or somewhat good way to govern their country. More than half expressed this view in every country polled. However, even at this broad level, enthusiasm for representative democracy was somewhat subdued – a median of only 33% said it is a *very* good approach to governing.

In addition to representative democracy, the survey found considerable support for direct democracy. Across the 38 countries polled, a median of 66% said “a democratic system where citizens, not elected officials, vote directly on major national issues to decide what becomes law” is a very or somewhat good way to govern their country. As we’ll discuss below, the appeal of direct democracy speaks to the demand many citizens express for more public involvement in politics.

Support for representative and direct democracy was widespread in 2017, but many were also open to nondemocratic alternatives

% who say ___ would be a good or bad way of governing our country



Note: Percentages are global medians based on 38 countries. Full question wordings for political systems: Representative democracy, “A democratic system where representatives elected by citizens decide what becomes law”; Direct democracy, “A democratic system where citizens, not elected officials, vote directly on major national issues to decide what becomes law”; Rule by experts, “Experts, not elected officials, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country”; Rule by a strong leader, “A system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from parliament or the courts”; Rule by the military, “The military rules the country.”

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey, Q29a-e.

“Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy”

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However, the same survey found substantial support for nondemocratic approaches to governing. For example, a median of 49% believed a system in which “experts, not elected

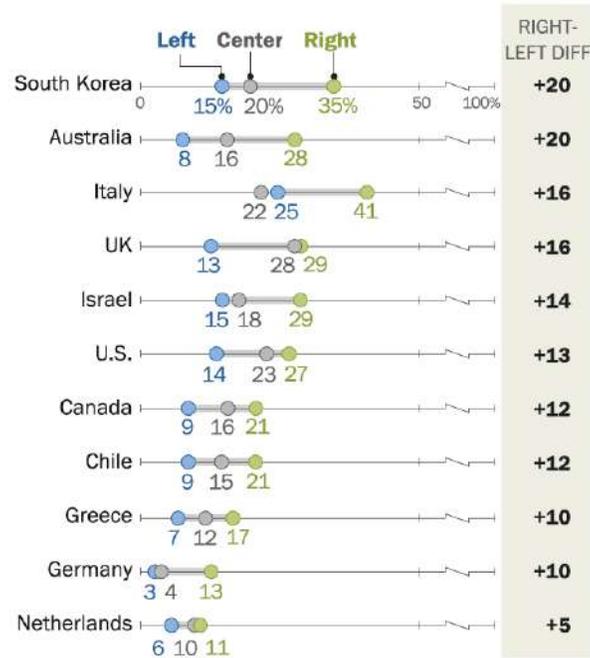
officials, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country” would be very or somewhat good.

And while autocracy was less popular, it was embraced by a remarkably large share of the public in many nations. A median of 26% considered “a system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from parliament or the courts” a very or somewhat good way to govern.

Even military rule had its supporters. A median of 24% said “a system in which the military rules the country” would be a very or somewhat good system. In five countries – Vietnam, Indonesia, India, South Africa and Nigeria – roughly half or more expressed this opinion, as did at least 40% in another six nations. And higher-income nations weren’t completely immune: 17% in the United States, Italy and France believed military rule could be a good way to run the country. The fact that so many citizens in “consolidated” democracies seemed willing to embrace military rule may seem a striking finding, but it’s largely consistent with what other survey research projects, such as the [World Values Survey](#) and the [Voter Research Group](#), have found over time.

In 2017, ideological right more supportive of strong leader ruling without constraints

% who say a system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from parliament or the courts would be a good way to govern our country



Note: In U.S., ideology is defined as conservative (right), moderate (center) and liberal (left). Only statistically significant differences shown.

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey, Q29c.

"Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy"

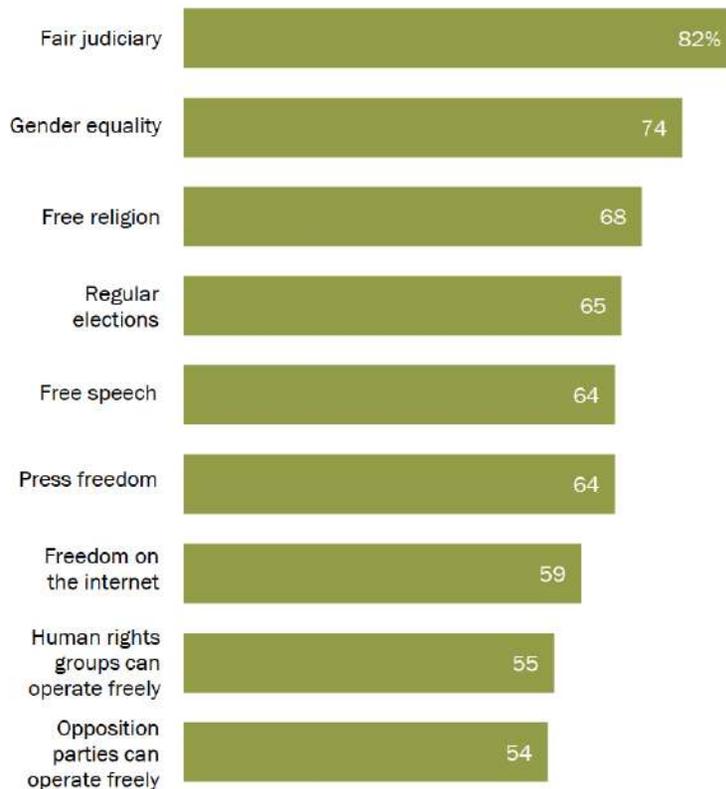
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In many countries, people who place themselves on the right of the political spectrum and those with less formal education are more likely to support alternatives to democratic governance. For example, 27% of Americans who identified as conservative thought autocracy would be a good way to govern, compared with 14% who identified as liberal. And 20% of conservatives supported military rule, compared with 12% of liberals. People with lower levels of educational attainment were more likely to consider military rule a good way to govern in 23 countries.

Beyond democracy as a system of government, there is also limited commitment to some specific democratic principles. In a [2019 Pew Research Center survey](#), most people said nine democratic rights and institutions tested were important. But again, these views varied widely across regions and countries, and in some places, relatively few said it is *very* important to have them in their country.

Global support for democratic principles in 2019

% who say it is *very important* to have ___ in their country



Note: Percentages are medians based on 34 countries.

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey, Q55a-f, Q57a-c.

"Democratic Rights Popular Globally but Commitment to Them Not Always Strong"

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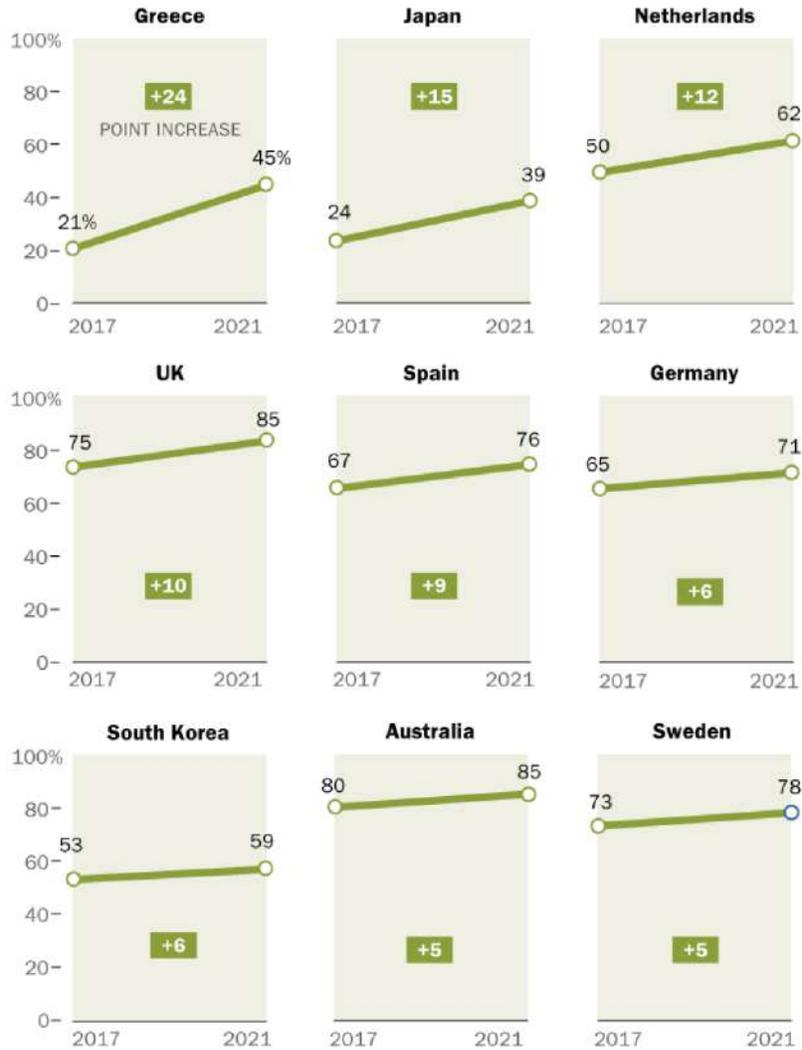
A median of more than 67% across 34 countries rated a fair judicial system, gender equality and freedom of religion as very important. But there was less support for holding regular competitive elections, freedom of speech and press freedom. A median of roughly six-in-ten or fewer said it was very important to have free expression on the internet or to allow human rights groups and opposition parties to operate freely.

Attitudes toward free expression illustrate the challenges of living up to and interpreting democratic principles, even in countries where democratic values are widely endorsed. [In a 2015 Pew Research Center survey](#), a median of 80% across 38 countries believed people should be able to publicly make statements that criticize their government's policies, but only 35% said the same about statements that are offensive to minority groups or are religiously offensive. And only around a quarter said people should be able to publicly make statements that are sexually explicit.

Political and social divisions are amplifying the challenges of contemporary democracy

Increasing shares see diversity positively

% who say having people of many different backgrounds, such as different ethnic groups, religions and races, makes (survey public) a **better** place to live



Note: Only statistically significant changes shown.
Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey, Q25.
"Diversity and Division in Advanced Economies"

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Most modern democracies are increasingly diverse, with globalization, economic restructuring, immigration and urbanization all contributing to social and cultural change. Recent trends from Pew Research Center surveys indicate that in many advanced economies, a growing share of the public views diversity as a strength of their society. In Greece, for example, the share who say having people of many different racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds makes their country a better place to live more than doubled between 2017 and 2021. Over the same period, favorable views of diversity increased by about 10 percentage points or more in Japan, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain. Slightly smaller increases can be seen in Germany, South Korea, Australia and Sweden.

Despite more people welcoming diversity, many continue to see racial and ethnic discrimination as a serious challenge. A median of 67% across the same 17 publics say racial or ethnic discrimination is a problem where they live. Roughly three-in-ten or more in Germany, Spain, the UK, Greece, France, the U.S. and Italy say it is a *very* serious problem in their country. Younger adults and those on the ideological left are often more convinced on this point. In the U.S., about two-thirds of Americans on the left say racial and ethnic discrimination is a very serious problem in their country, compared with only 19% of Americans on the political right.

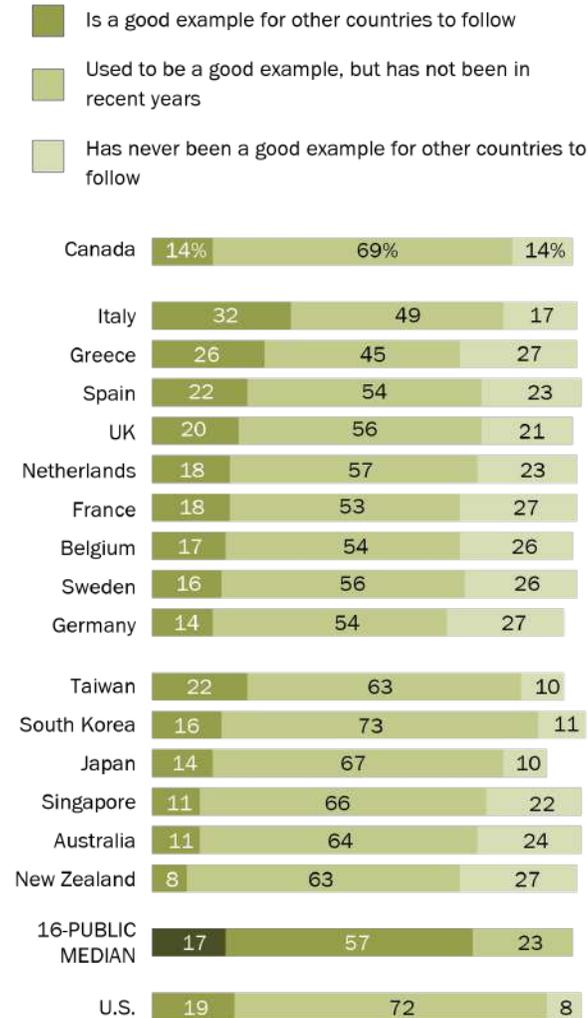
U.S. democracy no longer a model

While many people acknowledge racial and ethnic discrimination as a problem in their own country, they often see it as a larger issue in the U.S. A median of 89% across the advanced economies we polled in 2021 – not including the U.S. – say discrimination against groups based on their race or ethnicity is a serious problem in the U.S. This sentiment is strongest in Spain and New Zealand, where roughly two-thirds believe discrimination in the U.S. is a very important issue.

Overall, international publics see major challenges for American politics and society, even at a time when [attitudes toward the U.S.](#) have significantly improved following Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. Across the 16 advanced economies surveyed, a median of just 17% consider American democracy a good model for other countries to follow. A median of 57% think it used to be a good example but has not been in recent years. And around a quarter say the U.S. has never been a good example. The belief that democracy in the U.S. has never been a good model for other nations is especially common among young adults.

Most believe the U.S. is no longer a good model of democracy

% who say democracy in the U.S. ...



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey. Q6n.

"What People Around the World Like - and Dislike - About American Society and Politics"

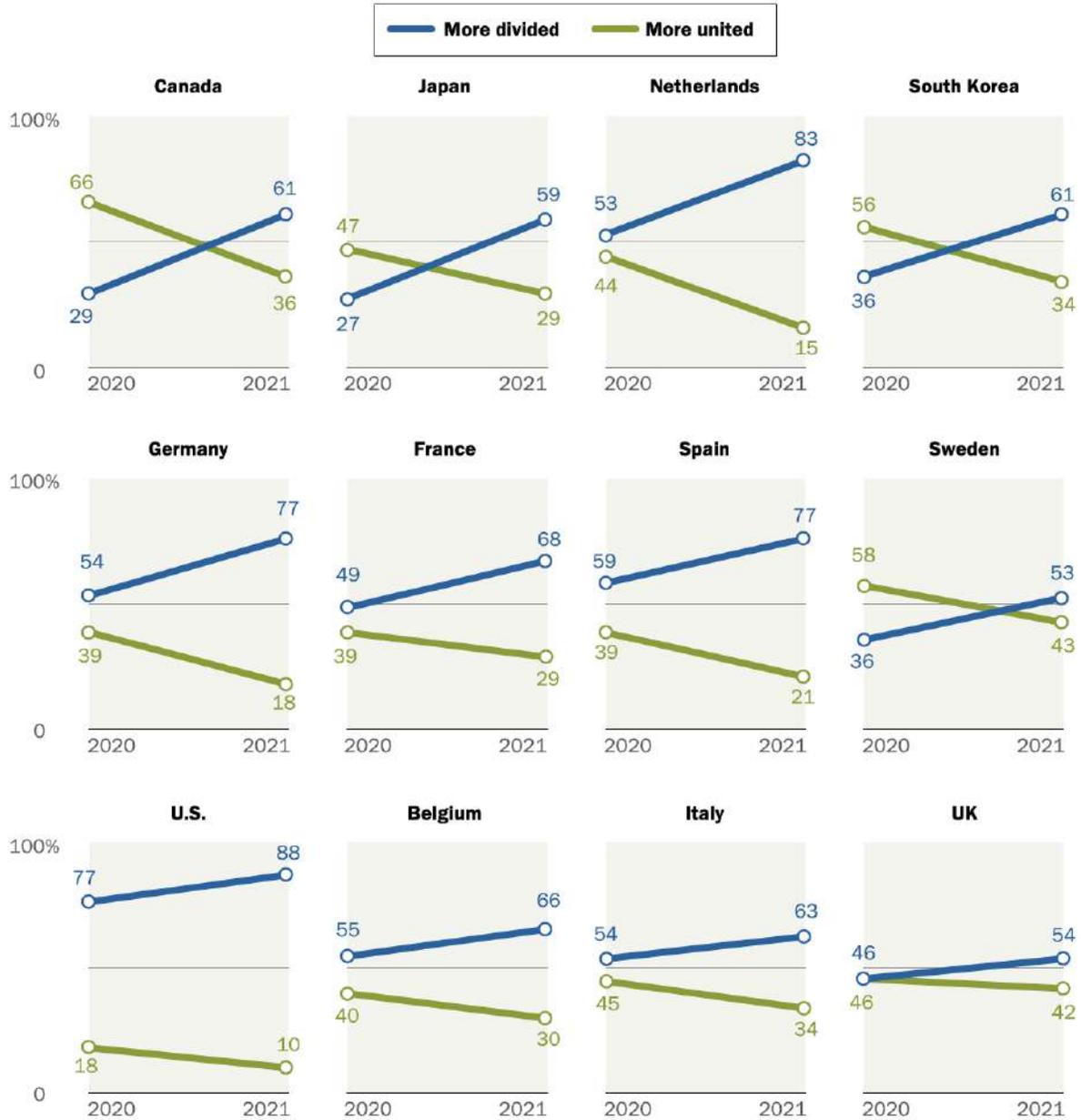
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Ideological and partisan differences are also a concern in some advanced economies. This is especially true in the U.S., where 90% say there are strong conflicts between people who support different political parties (the U.S. is tied with South Korea for the highest percentage on the survey). Whether cleavages are based on race, ethnicity or ideology, citizens who worry about these fault lines are often less satisfied with the way democracy is working and more likely to want significant reforms to their political systems.

The global pandemic has, if anything, intensified perceived political and social divisions. Across the 17 advanced economies we surveyed in 2021, a median of 61% say their [country is more divided](#) than before the outbreak. Moreover, the share of the public that feels this way has risen substantially as the pandemic has worn on. In the spring of 2020, only months into the crisis, just 29% of Canadians believed they were more divided, but a year later 61% express this view. We also found that people who think their country is more divided today are particularly likely to be dissatisfied with the state of democracy and to want political reform. COVID-19 may have provided a unifying threat in its early days, but the sense of unity has dissipated.

Sharp increases in share who say their country more divided than before pandemic

% who think (survey public) is now ___ than before the coronavirus outbreak



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey, Q9.

"People in Advanced Economies Say Their Society Is More Divided Than Before Pandemic"

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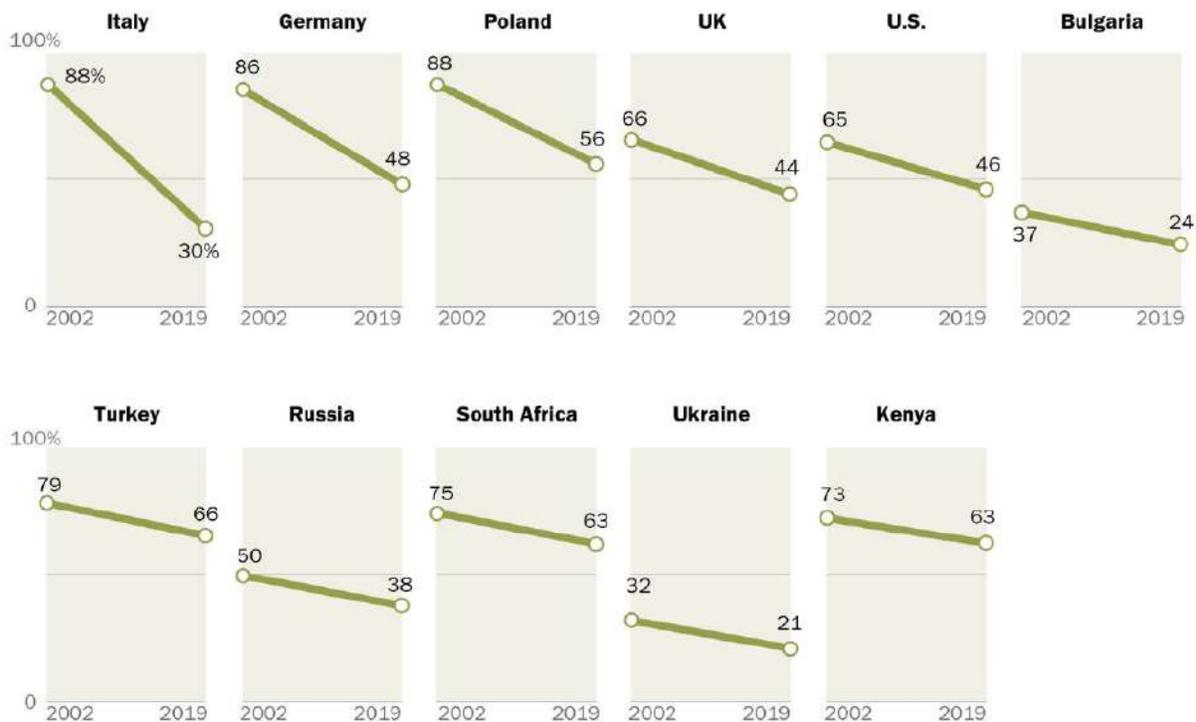
People want a stronger public voice in politics and policymaking

As our surveys have shown, citizens have no shortage of criticisms about the current state of democracy. But they also show that people haven't given up on democracy – in fact, instead of turning away from it, many want *more* democracy and a stronger voice in the political system.

Clearly, many are frustrated with the way political representation is working, and they are more than a little frustrated with elected representatives. In [a 34-nation Pew Research Center survey in 2019](#), a median of 64% disagreed with the statement “most elected officials care what people like me think.” While most feel politicians are not listening to them, many also see government working for the few rather than the many. A median of 50% disagreed with the statement “the state is run for the benefit of all the people,” while 49% agreed. And troublingly, in several countries where long-term trends are available, the belief that the state is run for the benefit of everyone in society has decreased significantly over time. For example, 88% of Italians in 2002 said their government was run for the benefit of all, but only 30% held this view in 2019. Over the same nearly two-decade period, the share who feel their state is run for the benefit of everyone also dropped significantly in Germany, Poland, the UK, the U.S., Bulgaria, Turkey, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine and Kenya.

By 2019, fewer in some countries said the state is run for the benefit of all

% who **agree** the state is run for the benefit of all the people



Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey, Q50e.
 “Democratic Rights Popular Globally but Commitment to Them Not Always Strong”

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However, all of this frustration has not necessarily led to apathy or helplessness. Despite the disconnect with political elites, many still think they have some agency over what happens in politics. Across 34 nations polled in 2019, a median of 67% agreed that voting gives ordinary people some say about how the government runs things.

But beyond voting, there is also considerable interest in reforms and democratic innovations that could provide citizens with a more active voice in decision-making. As noted above, the idea of direct democracy – where citizens vote directly on what does or does not become law – is popular around the globe. And a [fall 2020 survey](#) of France, Germany, the UK and the U.S. found that citizen assemblies, or forums where citizens chosen at random debate issues of national importance and make recommendations about what should be done, were overwhelmingly popular. Around three-quarters or more in each country said it is very or somewhat important for the national government to create citizen assemblies. About four-in-ten considered it *very* important. As a [recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) highlights, these efforts at deliberative democracy have become increasingly common in nations around the world in recent years. Regardless of what one thinks about direct or deliberative democracy, the fact that so many people seem interested in these ideas speaks to the widespread desire for a more active voice in the political system.

A [new analysis](#) of the ways in which people understand and value democracy also highlights the importance of voice. We recently asked people in Australia and the UK to describe what democracy means to them in their own words, and many spoke of the need for citizens to have a voice in government. Many used language describing democracy as a system in which elected officials listen to the public and citizens have a strong influence on decisions. One woman from the UK said that to her, democracy means that “everyone in their country of residence, including myself, deserves our views to be listened to and acted upon.”

Reversing the well-documented negative trends regarding the health of democracy around the world will be difficult and complicated, but our research suggests ordinary citizens want a voice in this discussion, and they believe a healthy democratic system will include a stronger role for them in making decisions about the important issues that shape their lives.

Acknowledgments

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

How to Make Biden's Free World Strategy Work

It's Not as Simple as Pitting Democracy Against Autocracy

BY HAL BRANDS
May 24, 2022

HAL BRANDS is Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the co-author of *The Danger Zone: The Coming Conflict with China*, which will be released in August.

Crises illuminate the contours of world affairs, and the war in Ukraine has had a clarifying effect on the Biden administration's approach to the world. Since taking office, U.S. President Joe Biden has argued that the struggle between democracy and autocracy is the defining clash of our time, even as critics and some members of his administration haven't always agreed. For Biden, at least, the Russian invasion and the world's response to it has proved that he was right all along.

In his State of Union address in early March, Biden described the war in Ukraine as a battle between freedom and tyranny. In Warsaw a few weeks later, in another speech replete with Cold War echoes, the president announced that Washington would lead the free world to victory in a great

struggle “between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force.”

Biden has good reason to be hitting these themes hard. The Russian invasion has shown how deeply the struggle to shape global order is rooted in opposing conceptions of domestic order. It has clarified and intensified the struggle between advanced democracies and Eurasian autocracies. And it has given Biden’s foreign policy, which seemed headed for frustration if not outright failure just a few months ago, a new lease on life. Yet critics of the democracy-autocracy thesis aren’t wrong to argue that the world isn’t quite so simple. Winning this contest of systems will require crafting a strategy that takes these complexities into account.

Biden must first specify what Washington opposes—not the existence of autocracy but that combination of tyranny, power, and hostility that so threatens the United States and the international order it has built. He must then flesh out his concept of the “free world,” a familiar term that can be more flexible than it sounds. Finally, his administration must address four key problems that this framing implies. A free-world strategy can help Washington prevent this century from becoming an age of autocratic advantage—but it raises pointed questions about who’s in, who’s out, and how to navigate a world that is increasingly divided and stubbornly interdependent at the same time.

SECOND CHANCES

Biden’s foreign policy has unfolded in three stages. The first six months of the administration showcased bold ideas and big plans. Biden came into office stressing the ideological roots of great-power rivalry and the need to strengthen the cohesion and resilience of the democratic world. His administration soothed alliances that had been strained during the Trump

era; it cultivated democratic cooperation on issues from semiconductor supply chains to stability in the western Pacific. Biden focused NATO and the Group of 7 on the China challenge; he raised the ambitions and expanded the activities of the Quad, a group that comprises Australia, India, Japan, and the United States; he pursued new schemes, such as the AUKUS security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, that connected democratic allies in creative ways. “America is back,” Biden claimed: a confident superpower was reasserting principled international leadership.

Then the next six months got very ugly. The ill-managed U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan delivered the citizens of that country to a brutal tyranny. Biden’s China agenda stagnated in the absence of any compelling trade policy for the Indo-Pacific; his “Asia first” approach foundered amid worsening tensions with Iran and Russia. The major democracy-themed initiative—the Summit for Democracy—was a glitchy, underwhelming Zoom meeting. Meanwhile, much of Biden’s domestic agenda—meant to build a “situation of strength” at home through ambitious reform—stalled in Congress while galloping inflation created domestic weakness instead.

Stage three initially looked even worse. By early 2022, U.S. officials were warning that Russian President Vladimir Putin would soon invade Ukraine and that he could easily conquer most of the country. In the run-up to the conflict, Washington adeptly revealed Russia’s plans through the rapid dissemination of sensitive intelligence. Yet it nonetheless struggled to deter Putin or secure transatlantic agreement on a punishing sanctions package, in part because of residual European skepticism that the assault would indeed occur. The administration was confronting the possibility that a frontline democratic state would be destroyed by an imperialist autocracy, creating

cascading global insecurity and a pervasive sense that the dictators were on the march.

Yet Ukrainian resistance, Russian blunders, timely American support, and surprising European unity have saved that country—and with it, Biden’s foreign policy. Shocked by the brazenness of the attack, a transregional coalition of democracies slapped harsh sanctions on Putin. The United States and European allies turned the tables on Moscow, providing money, guns, and intelligence that helped Ukraine defend itself and take a terrible toll on the invaders. The world’s premier alliance of democracies, NATO, is strengthening its military capabilities and preparing to take on new members; countries in the Indo-Pacific are moving faster, if not fast enough, to meet the parallel challenge from China. Putin’s invasion produced greater unity and urgency among the advanced democracies than at any time in decades. It also has largely, but not wholly, vindicated Biden’s democracy-versus-autocracy framing.

A WORLD (MOSTLY) DIVIDED

The war in Ukraine has certainly confirmed that regime type is a crucial driver of international behavior. Russia’s policies flow from a witch’s brew of history, geopolitics, personality, and ideology, but autocracy and aggression undoubtedly go together in Putin’s regime. A democratic Russia would not feel so threatened by a democratic, Western-facing Ukraine. A consolidated, modern democracy would not systematically commit war crimes as an act of policy, seize and annex a neighbor’s territory, and lie, shamelessly and continuously, to its population and the world.

The war has also reminded us, therefore, how profoundly the world would change if it were run by revisionist autocracies. Yes, the hypocrisies of the liberal international order are legion; dictators have no monopoly on

deception and coercion. Yet in a system that was not led by Washington or another democratic superpower, the aggressive, flagrantly acquisitive action Putin has taken in Ukraine, and that Beijing has taken in the South China Sea, would be far more common. Great-power predation—economic, diplomatic, military—would be the norm the world endures rather than the exception it has the luxury of criticizing. The type of global order a great power pursues is the outward projection of its political order at home.

The war, then, has both highlighted and deepened the fundamental global cleavage today—the clash between advanced democracies that are committed to the existing international order and the Eurasian autocracies trying to overturn it. Regional aggression is starting to elicit global democratic responses. The coalition that has sanctioned Russia includes not just the United States and Europe but also Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan—just as European powers are asserting their interest in preventing China from dominating the western Pacific.

At the same time, the world's two great autocracies are joining hands. A war that began weeks after Russia and China touted a relationship with “no limits” will surely produce an even tighter axis, since neither country, having alienated much of the democratic world, has anywhere else to go for now. And that, in turn, will further encourage democracies at both ends of Eurasia and beyond to cooperate in confronting an emerging illiberal coalition. Biden may say that Washington wishes to avoid a world of opposing blocs, but that is precisely the thrust of global events and U.S. policy.

Yet the “clash of systems” model doesn't explain everything. If most advanced democracies have rallied, many developing democracies have not. India and Brazil have adopted a position of neutrality. Countries in Africa,

Latin America, and Southeast Asia have sought a middle ground. There are always specific reasons, such as India's dependence on Russian arms or Brazil's reliance on Russian fertilizer. Yet this new nonaligned movement is a reminder that many of the United States' democratic brethren are choosing not to choose.

Moreover, the Biden administration is rediscovering its reliance on nondemocracies. Perhaps one day a green energy revolution will make the petrostates irrelevant, but for now Washington needs Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies to offset the energy shock the war has caused. Containing Russia and China will require the cooperation of countries—including Singapore, Turkey, and Vietnam—that are governed in illiberal ways. The United States isn't opposed to all autocracies, and not all democracies are fully on its side.

Finally, the war in Ukraine has shown the perils of interdependence with hostile regimes—but that interdependence isn't going away. The advanced democracies can brutalize Russia economically, but they can't—at a tolerable cost—totally sever it from the world. They can't, and shouldn't, come anywhere close to a complete decoupling from China. Freedom-versus-tyranny rhetoric brings to mind a global landscape fully split in two. But we live in a world where two increasingly hostile camps cannot fully escape each other's economic and technological embrace.

THE PYRAMID

If Biden intends to pursue a free-world strategy, his first task is to clarify what, exactly, the United States opposes. The answer is not autocracy per se, given that Washington must work with some illiberal regimes to check others. What the United States opposes is the marriage of tyranny, power, and hostility: those authoritarian regimes that have the intent and the ability

to fundamentally challenge the existing international system, by exporting the violence and illiberalism they practice at home to the world.

This behavior can take the form of outright territorial aggression, whether blatant or subtle; it can involve economic and political coercion meant to distort the foreign policies and domestic politics of other nations. It can involve meddling and subversion that impairs the functioning of democratic societies, transnational repression that can chill basic liberties globally, or efforts to weaponize new technologies in ways that could drastically shift the balance of power or the balance of freedom and oppression. Different behaviors will, of course, merit different responses. But it is this combination of autocracy, capability, and aggressive conduct that the free world must organize itself to meet.

Which means that Biden must also better articulate the coalition he aims to rally. The free world is a Cold War–era concept making a comeback. The original phrase, though, was more malleable than we often remember. It included liberal democracies, friendly authoritarians, and states of various shades in between. Today, the free world is best thought of as a three-tiered coalition.

The first tier features the United States’ democratic treaty allies—the (mostly) liberal democracies that make up the Anglosphere, the transatlantic community, and the strongest links in the chain of U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific. This group features deep, institutionalized cooperation based on shared values as well as shared interests; it constitutes the core of any coalition to resist aggression, maintain democratic technological dominance, and otherwise thwart the autocratic challenge. And although U.S. alliances are organized regionally or bilaterally, they create preponderant global strength: including the United States, this group commands a majority of

world GDP and military spending. The key, then, will be not simply enhancing capabilities and collaboration within existing alliances but also forging greater connections across them, as AUKUS has done.

The second tier includes democratic partners. These countries are often imperfectly or inconsistently aligned with the United States. They are far from wholly comfortable with American power. Yet they would surely be far less comfortable still in a world where expansionist autocracies had the advantage, so they will lend critical assistance on select matters.

India may be hesitant to break with Russia, but it is already a vital part of the geopolitical and technological balancing effort vis-à-vis China.

Indonesia will increasingly cooperate with Washington on security issues, even as it maintains close commercial ties to Beijing. Ukraine and Taiwan are non-allies that constitute geopolitical bulwarks in crucial regions. Biden's goal should be to further develop institutions and arrangements, such as the Quad or various tech alliances, that enhance the overall power of the free world by thickening the connective tissue between its first and second tiers.

The third tier consists of comparatively benign autocracies—illiberal countries that still support an international system led by a democratic superpower. Admittedly, efforts to draw distinctions between good and bad dictators have a sordid lineage. But certain autocracies do depend on an open, U.S.-led global economy; occupy strategic geography that leaves them vulnerable to Beijing or Moscow and thus dependent on Washington; or are otherwise deeply wired into the existing system. These countries, such as Vietnam and Singapore, will work with the United States on a transactional basis, to thwart more extreme forms of autocratic aggression. But their dealings with democracies will be more attenuated when it comes to human rights, the future of the Internet, and other governance issues.

ROCKY ROAD TO ... WHERE?

A free-world strategy can thus be principled without being absolutist or self-defeating. It offers a plausible rationale for working with some autocrats against others. And it packs a strategic punch: a free-world coalition can allow the United States and its friends to marshal a decisive superiority on critical issues. Nonetheless, challenges abound.

The first involves managing interdependence in a fragmenting world. The goal here should be not to fully unwind those ties but to ensure that the *terms* of interdependence favor the free world. This will require selective decoupling—denying Chinese firms access to investment and high-tech inputs, for instance, or increasing Europe’s freedom of action by weaning it off Russian energy supplies. More important will be increasing the commercial, financial, and technological cohesion of the free world, to accelerate its growth and innovation and decrease its vulnerability to autocratic coercion. This is urgent: China is racing to reduce its susceptibility to international economic pressure, in recognition that the terms of interdependence may determine the balance of leverage in a crisis.

A separate challenge is engaging ambivalent, democratic partners, countries that cooperate with Washington on concrete issues but don’t particularly like the free-world model. The United States will need different rhetoric for different audiences: self-determination and freedom of geopolitical choice may sell better than democracy-versus-tyranny in Africa or Southeast Asia. Washington should carefully prioritize what it needs from these partners, whose choice of 5G telecommunications provider may be more important than their position on Ukraine. Yet Biden must also exploit opportunities the war has provided.

India's strategy of using Russian arms to protect itself against China is now bankrupt: if Moscow is crippled by conflict and sanctions, and ever more dependent on Beijing, then it can't or won't provide Delhi with the military equipment it might need in a crisis. By helping India reduce its reliance on Russian military gear, the United States and other democratic countries can also reduce India's incentives for hedging over time.

A free-world strategy also has awkward implications for estranged autocratic partners. After all, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates do engage in transnational repression, weaponize surveillance technologies, and coerce their neighbors. Both have pulled closer to Russia and China, in part for economic reasons, in part because of a declining U.S. interest in Persian Gulf security, and in part because strongmen have an ideological affinity for other strongmen. Both countries still have long-standing, extensive ties to the United States, with whom they share an interest in containing Iran; their relationships with Washington are valuable enough that they won't crumble overnight. But one possible upshot of a more starkly divided world is that the most important Gulf monarchies could end up on the other side.

Even if a green revolution eventually turns Riyadh and Abu Dhabi into has-beens—a big “if”—in the medium term this could lead to nasty strategic consequences in a region that still matters very much. For the time being, then, a free-world strategy can't liberate the United States from ongoing engagement, and perhaps ticklish compromises, with key autocracies that have a foot in both camps.

Finally, Biden should answer a question he has avoided so far: How does this end? A free-world strategy doesn't require a goal of regime change, although Biden's ad-libbed comments about Putin haven't clarified the issue.

Democracies can moderate tensions with hostile autocracies, as détente showed during the Cold War. But if this is really a contest between countries with fundamentally different worldviews based on fundamentally different domestic orders, then such a détente will, once again, be temporary. The United States spent decades trying to draw Moscow and Beijing into the international system; now it must strengthen the free world around them, and reduce their ability to do harm, until their internal politics shift or their power fades. A free-world strategy can eventually produce a happy ending. But “eventually” may be a very long time.

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Big Tech vs. Red Tech: The Diminishing of Democracy in the Digital Age

By: [SAMIR SARAN](#) and [SHASHANK MATTOO](#)

February 15, 2022

In the third decade of the twenty-first century, democracies face a new adversary — technology. Technology was once seen as a force for good, which could bridge the gap between the state and restless streets. Today, owned and controlled by large enterprises and extra-territorial governments, that very technology sometimes undermines the foundations of democracy, where it functions as a public sphere and a vibrant information exchange.

Much of the world has blearily woken up to big tech's ambitions, expansion and unaccountable power to shape the human condition. A few companies, dotted on America's West Coast (henceforth referred to as big tech), now possess the ability to harness the digital gold rush — along with the equally overwhelming influence on discourse in democratic societies. In parallel, a rising China, with its rapid successes in building a vibrant technology ecosystem, has unleashed plans to dominate innovation, high technology and the global perceptions ecosystem (henceforth referred to as red tech).

Technology from the West Coast of the United States and technology that seeks to serve the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have both chosen to pursue their defined objectives with little thought for constitutional systems and laws in third countries. As such, much of the democratic world is at risk of being caught in the vice-like grip of big tech and red tech. It is, therefore, time for democratic societies to discover and examine means to secure an open and free global technological ecosystem that serves all shades of democracy.

Why the Battle for Tech Matters

The threat that big tech poses to democracy is multifaceted. First, major social media platforms — Twitter, Facebook, Google and others — curate, promote and curtail information received by and, indeed, even the opinions of citizens in democratic societies. This power over speech and expression, and therefore over our politics and polity, is unrivalled in history (Baer and Chin 2021). While US steel, big oil and big tobacco were brought to heel by domestic regulations and national governments, the transnational reach of big tech has made it much harder to circumscribe (Lago 2021).

Operating outside rules and regulations prescribed by sovereign constitutions, social media platforms now exercise a worrying level of influence without accountability. Big tech has deplatformed controversial political figures such as Donald Trump (Byers 2021); censored content, a decision that internal ombudsmen disagree with (Eidelman and Ruane 2021); and has encouraged an engagement-based content ranking system that has allowed everything from disinformation about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to hate speech to spread (Harris 2021). Platforms are free to decide whether they function as private hosting platforms or providers of a vital public utility; they cannot be both. Yet, they pick and choose between the two functions as it suits them.

National governments have not been asleep at the wheel. From New Delhi to Canberra, they have tabled regulations to rein in social media behemoths. In every instance, platform enterprises have chosen to obstruct, obfuscate and outmanoeuvre regulatory efforts (Clayton 2021). Left unregulated, our digital

commons may become a noxious space that suffocates democracy, rather than being the promised breath of fresh air.

The future of democratic societies will also be decided by the contest with China in high technology. This competition runs deeper than China's desire to build "national champions" that can outcompete the Googles and Apples of the world. To Beijing, China's technology capabilities directly serve interests, ideologies and inclinations of the CCP (Tyagi 2021). Even as the Great Firewall of China allows the CCP monopoly control over ideas and over truth among its own citizens, China's ever-increasing reach and economic expansion provides the party the ability to pervert and undermine the public sphere of other nations.

From harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of facial recognition technologies to vastly expand its citizen surveillance system (Davies 2021) to deploying those very capabilities against Uighur minorities in Xinjiang (Mozur 2019), the CCP will not shy away from deploying tech to reinforce strict authoritarian control at home. Overseas, "wolf warriors" (Martin 2021) insert themselves into every global debate of consequence and Chinese money power prevents Western media or social media from acting against such insidious and troubling participation that aggravates cleavages in other societies.

As China's economic influence and technological capabilities have grown, it has sought to influence and manipulate global publics. China's official media, governmental entities and diplomats have leveraged open platforms such as Twitter to peddle disinformation on the origins of COVID-19 (Associated Press 2021). China's influence operations have also extended to election interference in Taiwan (Kurlantzick 2019), and they are increasingly inserting themselves in other countries as well. According to Freedom House, China has used its technological capabilities, in tandem with its economic and political power, to launch a massive influence operation that is gaming democracies from the inside out (Cook 2020).

Red tech is clearly an extension of the CCP's global ambitions. For example, global standards bodies and multilateral organizations have been flooded with standards proposals by Chinese tech firms that would enshrine CCP values into the fundamental architecture of the internet (Gargeyas 2021). At the United Nations, Huawei and other Chinese state-owned enterprises have led advocacy for a "New IP" to replace the existing TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) structure of the internet (Gross and Murgia 2020). Industry analysts have expressed concern that this new structure, with inbuilt controls that would allow for vastly increased governmental interference, is fundamentally at odds with the open internet of today.

The ascendance of Chinese standards and tech also worries global actors for other reasons. While the United States and the European Union have enabled the creation of penetrated and argumentative democracies — wherein all countries and civil society organizations can advocate for the regulation of big tech or the promulgation of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards — China has no equivalent political structure. In fact, China's intemperate wolf warrior diplomacy, which has precipitated clashes with Australia (Ryan 2020), Sweden (BBC News 2018) and France (Seibt 2021), among others, demonstrates that China has little tolerance for dissenting views or for reciprocal tolerance of criticism.

The Regulatory Void

Despite the high stakes and clear threat, regulation has failed to keep up. Major powers have not come to the fundamental realization that regulations must be both political and functional. Technology regulations

driven by industry may have prized functionality, but both big tech's subversion of regular constitutional processes and democratic debate as well as red tech's brazen advancement of the CCP's agenda demand regulation to recognize and return to its political roots.

Part of the reluctance to commit to a more political vision of regulation stems from overdependence on a China that dominates major global economies and the tech innovation ecosystem (Pletka and Scissors 2020). Given the massive size of the Chinese market, its capable and growing technology product and service lines, and Beijing's willingness to use market access as leverage, many dither in enforcing regulations that exclude Chinese technology from specific sectors and functions. Others feel that government interference and politicization in regulatory matters could result in the fracturing of the global tech innovation ecosystem altogether (Schneider-Petsinger et al. 2019).

However, the return to more political regulation to oversee technology in the days ahead is inevitable. Simply, it is part of a well-established historical cycle. As Caetano Penna (2022) points out, every technological revolution has generated cycles of exuberance that leave contemporary social forces and political institutions in disarray. Only later does society mobilize to reshape institutions to suit a new era. Such regulation in service of societal goals has always been a key determinant in the evolution of industrialized societies. The spread of communication technologies in the boom from the 1980s to 2008 represented a cycle of exuberance. Today, however, technology possesses the power to fundamentally remake, disrupt and destabilize societies. AI-enabled machines threaten to put millions out of work and social media platforms, with a little Chinese help, have the potential to undermine democracies.

What Does a More Political Vision Look Like?

States, civil societies and general publics will have to take back control of the conversation over technology from tech companies. Part of this process will be nationally led and the rest multilateral. Domestic polities need to debate and hammer out a national consensus on some key issues, including on whether to enshrine privacy as a fundamental right. Assuming privacy is guaranteed, what level of privacy would suit their purposes? Who should own and have access to data? Who decides, and through what process, whether particular ideologies and groups should have access to the public commons?

In parts of the world where this debate is ongoing, robust data protection and privacy laws have been framed. While Canada now holds major tech platforms to the same transparency standards as traditional broadcasting groups (Solomon, Polataiko and Hayes 2021), Australia (Choudhury 2021) and India (Saran 2021) have adopted more stringent social media rules aimed at forcing big tech to comply with national-level regulations and directives on content. Nations would also have to debate the merits and benefits of the existing open internet model versus competing visions such as China's New IP proposal. Each of these decisions would require clear choices by citizens who have, thus far, been excluded from conversations by governing elites and technology companies.

At the multilateral level, bringing politics back into regulation will help safeguard data and democracies. An excellent example of political regulation is the European GDPR data architecture. Even firms outside the European Union that provide services to EU citizens find themselves subject to the European Union's fundamentally political vision of privacy for its citizens (Nadeau 2020). The GDPR has also allowed for another political choice: flows of data will be free within the European Union but will be subject to

protections upon leaving its borders.¹ In effect, the European Union has erected a robust regime of protection that privileges countries that share a similar vision of privacy and data protection.

The European Union's economic, political and normative leverage, popularized through the "Brussels effect," has effectively forced other regimes to make way for it, with numerous countries enacting similar procedures. As such, the European experience in norms and standards setting is useful. Countries that share similar political visions of internet governance, disinformation and other aspects of technology policy can come together multilaterally to make the vision prevail globally. And disruptive players such as China, still new to the standards game, must make their peace with liberal democratic norms — or risk being left out in the cold.

Robert Fay suggests key digital powers come together to form a multilateral body, the Digital Stability Board (DSB), which would enact digital policy in much the same way that the Financial Stability Board helps design and monitor the implementation of key financial policies while assessing risks and vulnerabilities in the global financial system (Emanuele 2021). A DSB would lead discussion on regulating data value chains, countering misinformation and the development of cutting-edge technologies such as AI (ibid.). Given the transnational nature of the challenge posed by big tech's dominance, a forum such as the DSB would be well suited to lay down the rules of the road on regulation and reining in major tech platforms.

While such a DSB would be useful to manage hostilities with powers such as China, another interesting proposal comes in the form of a group of 10 leading democracies, or D10. Proposed by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (Fisher 2020), a D10 grouping would significantly source equipment for key technologies such as 5G from countries within the partnership. It could also develop a shared approach on key threats facing democracies, including countering disinformation, penalizing purveyors of influence operations such as China (or even Russia and other countries) and devising workable regulations for social media platforms that strike a balance between fighting fake news and preserving freedom of expression.

Ultimately, the introduction of the D10 to digital policy debates would signify a shared political vision, born out of democratic values, toward building the digital economy and regulating malcontents in the system. Good, old-fashioned democratic politics remains a primary driver even in the digital age. Wolves and wolf warriors hunt in packs; open societies need to respond with similar unity of purpose.

This piece builds on an intervention by Samir Saran at the Summit for Democracy on December 10, 2021.

^[1] See <https://gdpr-info.eu/issues/third-countries/>.

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The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule

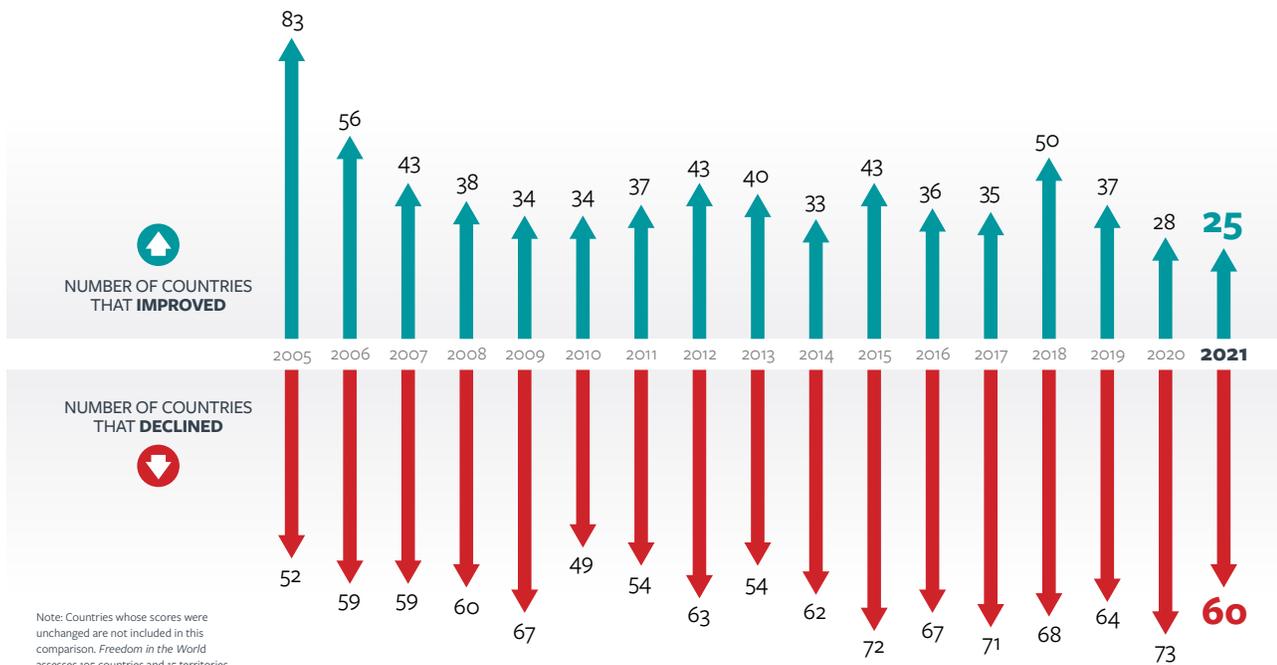
By Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz

Global freedom faces a dire threat. Around the world, the enemies of liberal democracy—a form of self-government in which human rights are recognized and every individual is entitled to equal treatment under law—are accelerating their attacks.

Authoritarian regimes have become more effective at co-opting or circumventing the norms and institutions meant to support basic liberties, and at providing aid to others who wish to do the same. In countries with long-established democracies, internal forces have exploited the shortcomings in their systems, distorting national politics to promote hatred, violence, and unbridled power.

A GROWING DEMOCRACY GAP: 16 YEARS OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

Countries with aggregate score declines in *Freedom in the World* have outnumbered those with gains every year for the past 16 years.

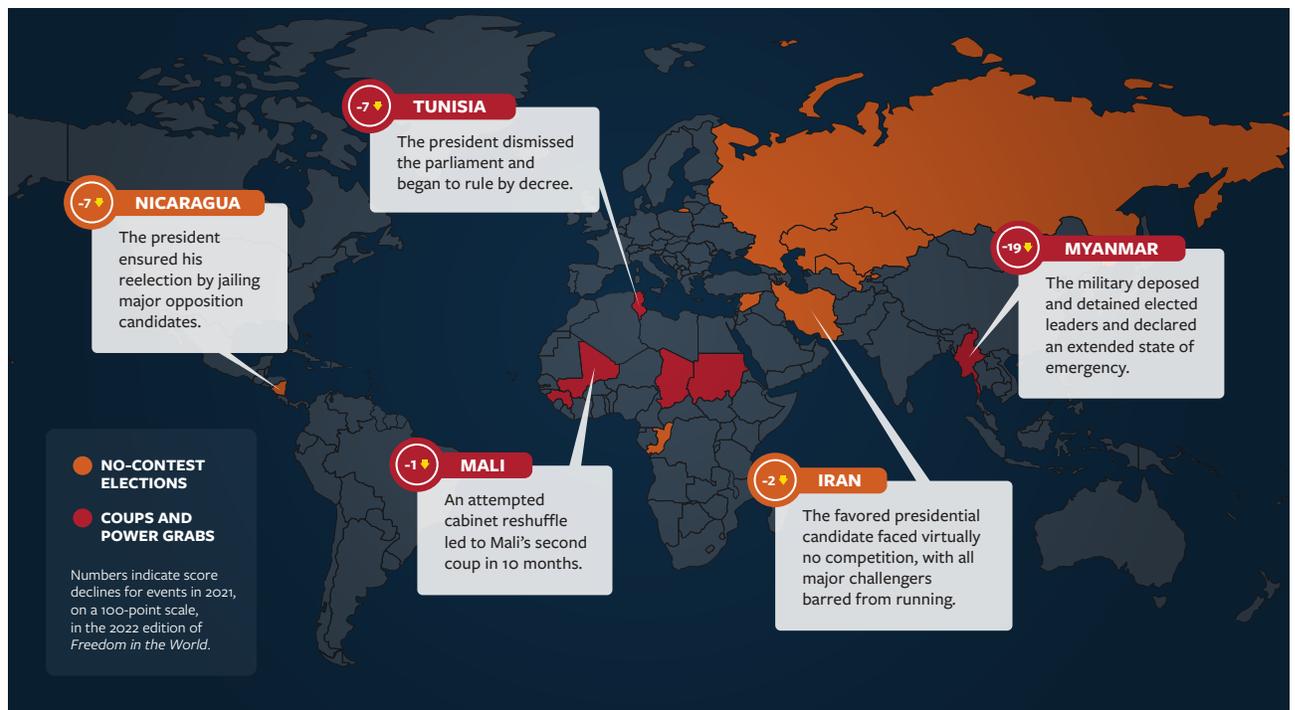


Those countries that have struggled in the space between democracy and authoritarianism, meanwhile, are increasingly tilting toward the latter. The global order is nearing a tipping point, and if democracy’s defenders do not work together to help guarantee freedom for all people, the authoritarian model will prevail.

The present threat to democracy is the product of 16 consecutive years of decline in global freedom. A total of 60 countries suffered declines over the past year, while only 25 improved. As of today, some 38 percent of the global population live in Not Free countries, the highest proportion since 1997. Only about 20 percent now live in Free countries.

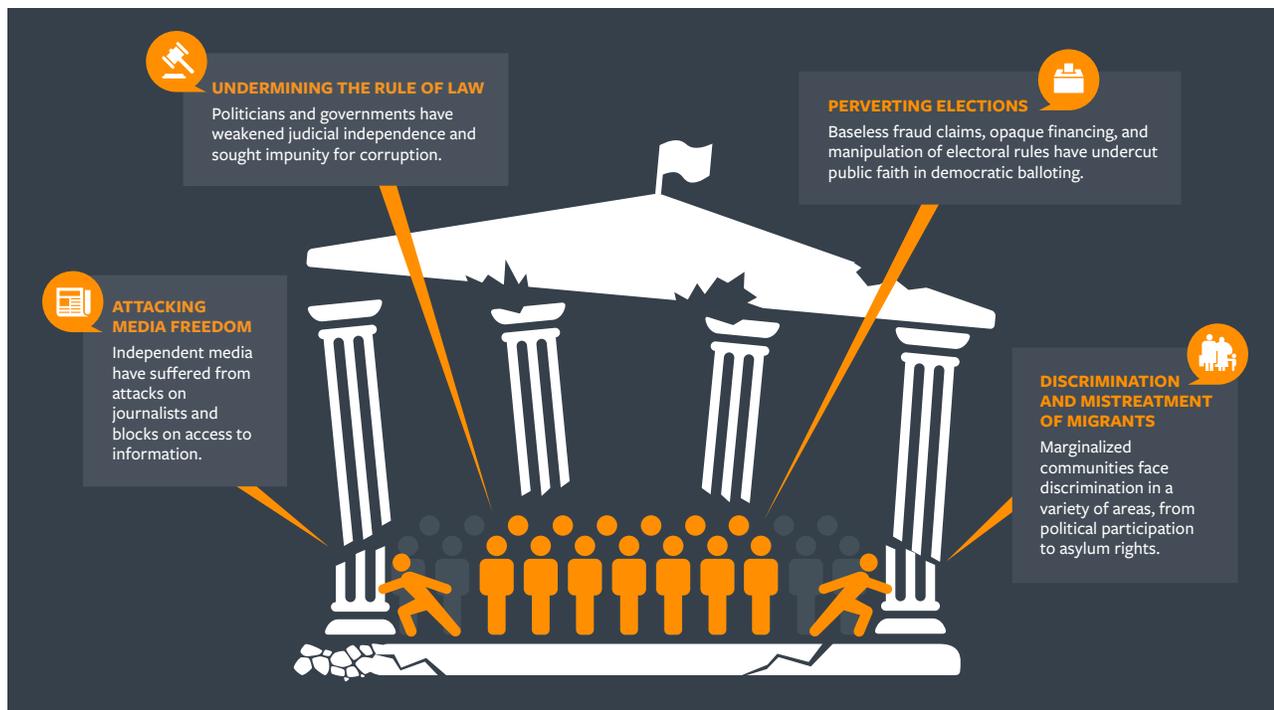
BREAKING DEMOCRATIC NORMS

Incumbent leaders and generals carried out illegitimate elections, power grabs, and coups with little fear of international repercussions in 2021.



CHALLENGES WITHIN ESTABLISHED DEMOCRACIES

Over the past 16 years, internal forces have damaged the pillars of freedom in existing democracies.



Key Global Findings

- Autocrats have created a more favorable international environment for themselves over the past decade and a half**, empowered by their own political and economic might as well as waning pressure from democracies. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) plays a leading role in promoting autocratic norms. Citing its self-serving interpretation of state sovereignty, the party strives to carve out space for incumbent governments to act as they choose without oversight or consequences. It offers an alternative to democracies as a source of international support and investment, helping would-be autocrats to entrench themselves in office, adopt aspects of the CCP governance model, and enrich their regimes while ignoring principles like transparency and fair competition.
- Elections, even when critically flawed, have long given authoritarian leaders a veneer of legitimacy, both at home and abroad. **As international norms shift in the direction of autocracy, however, these exercises in democratic theater have become increasingly farcical.** In the run-up to Russia’s September 2021 parliamentary elections, the regime of President Vladimir Putin dispelled the illusion of competition

by imprisoning opposition leader Aleksey Navalny and tarring his movement as “extremist,” which prevented any candidates who were even loosely associated with it from running for office. The November 2021 presidential election in Nicaragua was similarly uncompetitive. President Daniel Ortega’s authoritarian government arrested at least seven potential opposition candidates on charges including treason.

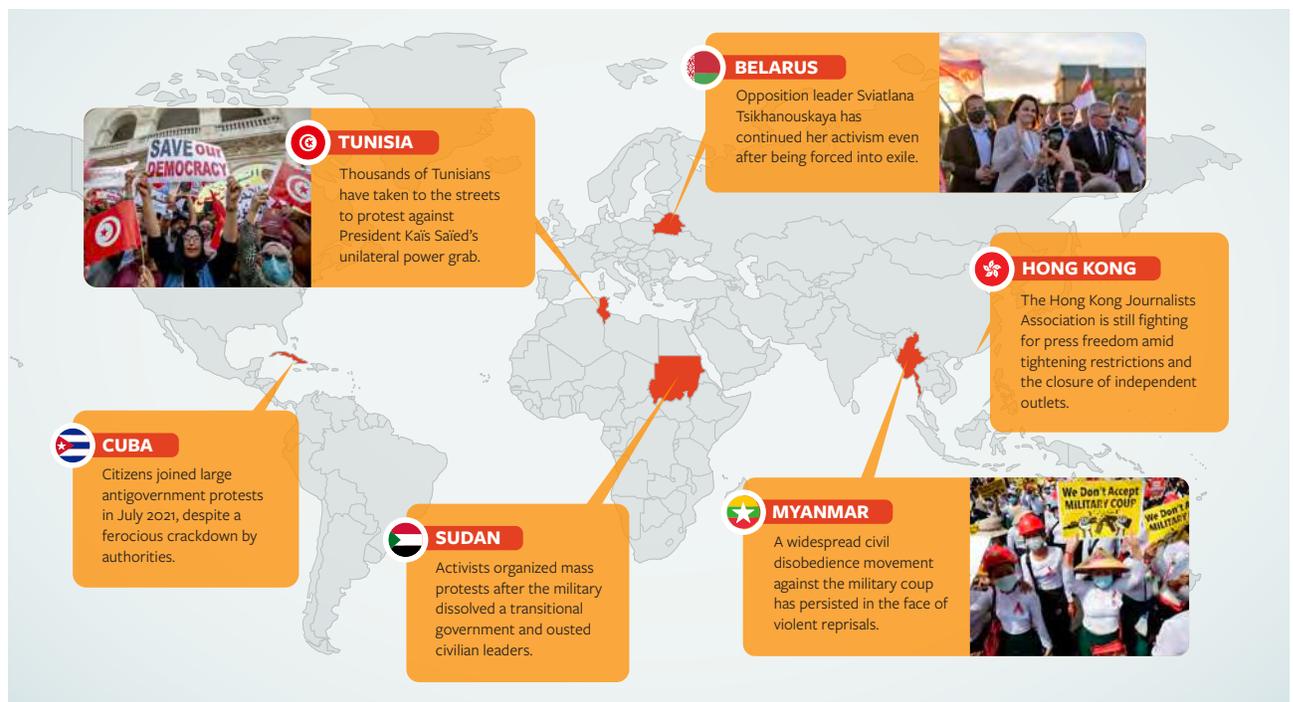
- In another sign that international deterrents against antidemocratic behavior are losing force, **coups were more common in 2021 than in any of the previous 10 years.** The first took place in February in Myanmar. As a result, Myanmar experienced the world’s largest contraction in freedom last year. In Sudan, weeks before the transitional government was scheduled to come under

full civilian control after a 2019 coup, the military seized power in October 2021 and declared a state of emergency.

- **Democracies are being harmed from within by illiberal forces, including unscrupulous politicians willing to corrupt and shatter the very institutions that brought them to power.** This was arguably most visible last year in the United States, where rioters stormed the Capitol on January 6 as part of an organized attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election. But freely elected leaders from Brazil to India have also taken or threatened a variety of antidemocratic actions, and the resulting breakdown in shared values among democracies has led to a weakening of these values on the international stage.

GLOBAL RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Despite significant constraints, people all over the world are resisting autocracy and pushing for democratic change.



- **Authoritarian leaders are no longer isolated holdouts in a democratizing world. Instead they are actively collaborating with one another to spread new forms of repression and rebuff democratic pressure.** In some cases the authoritarian assistance is largely economic. For example, the governments of Russia, China, and Turkey have provided trade and investment to the Venezuelan regime, offsetting sanctions imposed by democracies for its rigged elections and crackdowns on the opposition. But in other instances the support is much more direct: During the 2020 protests against fraudulent elections in Belarus, the Kremlin dispatched Russian propagandists to take the place of striking Belarusian journalists, and offered its security forces to bolster the Belarusian authorities’

violent dispersal of demonstrations. Antidemocratic figures within more democratic countries have begun to engage in international cooperation as well.

- **Even in a year dominated by disturbing setbacks to democracy, people around the world demonstrated its continued appeal and capacity for renewal.** From Sudan to Myanmar, people continue to risk their lives in the pursuit of freedom in their countries. Many others undertake dangerous journeys in order to live freely elsewhere. Democratic governments and societies must harness and support this common desire for fundamental rights and build a world in which it is ultimately fulfilled.

Freedom in the World 2022 Status Changes

Ecuador



Ecuador’s status improved from Partly Free to Free because the year’s presidential and legislative elections did not suffer from the types of abuses seen in previous contests, such as the misuse of public resources, and resulted in an orderly transfer of power between rival parties.

Guinea



Guinea’s status declined from Partly Free to Not Free because military commanders seized power in a coup, removing President Alpha Condé and dissolving the legislature.

Haiti



Haiti’s status declined from Partly Free to Not Free due to the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, an ongoing breakdown in the electoral system and other state institutions, and the corrosive effects of organized crime and violence on civic life.

Peru



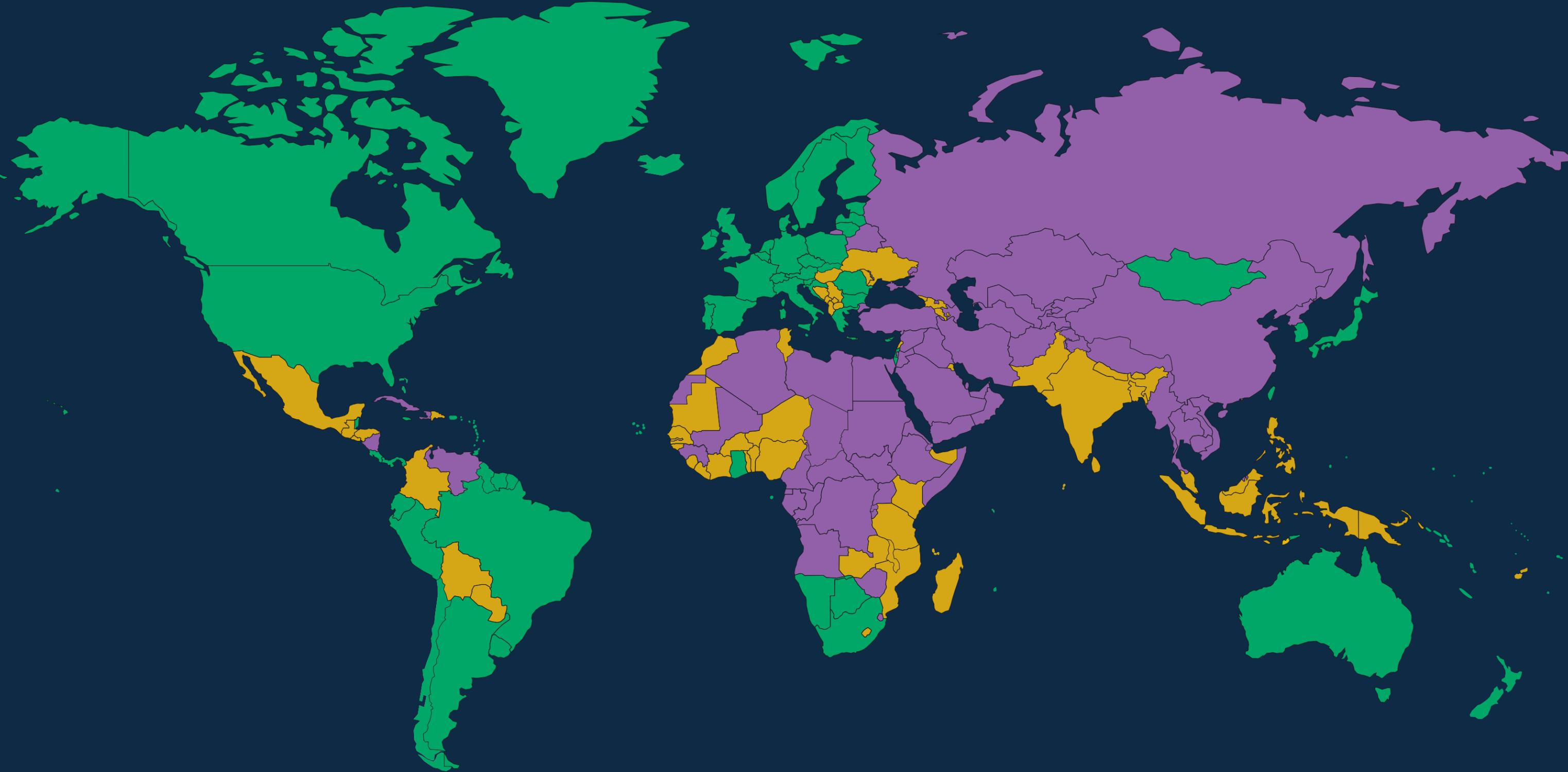
Peru’s status improved from Partly Free to Free because the successful election of a new president and Congress served to ease, at least temporarily, a pattern of institutional clashes between the executive and legislative branches that had disrupted governance for a number of years.

Tunisia



Tunisia’s status declined from Free to Partly Free because President Kais Saïed unilaterally dismissed and replaced the elected government, indefinitely suspended the parliament, and imposed harsh restrictions on civil liberties to suppress opposition to his actions.

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2022



FREE PARTLY FREE NOT FREE

Countries in the Spotlight

The following countries featured important developments in 2021 that affected their democratic trajectory, and deserve special scrutiny in 2022.



Chile: Elections for a constitutional convention and the presidency proceeded with few problems and high levels of legitimacy, bucking a trend of polarization and gridlock that has thwarted reforms in other democracies in recent years.



Iran: Hard-line candidate Ebrahim Raisi won the presidency after the unelected Guardian Council disqualified all of his major opponents, and record-low turnout signaled voters' frustration with the tightly controlled process.



Iraq: Iranian political influence dwindled as pro-Iran parties with links to militia groups experienced defeats in parliamentary elections that featured fewer irregularities than past contests.



Myanmar: The military seized power in a coup to prevent the sitting of a newly elected parliament after its favored party was defeated, then used lethal violence to suppress a determined prodemocracy protest movement.



Nicaragua: President Daniel Ortega ensured his own reelection by escalating his government's attacks on civil society and overseeing the arrest of several opposition candidates.



Russia: President Vladimir Putin's regime expanded its crackdown on political opponents and civil society organizations, thwarting any genuine competition in the September parliamentary elections.



Slovenia: The country suffered a significant decline in civil liberties as Prime Minister Janez Janša's populist government increased its hostility toward civil society groups and the media and continued to undermine independent institutions and the rule of law.



Sudan: A military coup blocked the country's transition to full civilian rule and democratic elections, leading the "March of Millions" movement to demand change in defiance of bloody crackdowns.



Thailand: As youth-led protests calling for constitutional reform continued, the government, headed by leaders of the most recent military coup, ramped up prosecutions of demonstrators for violating lèse-majesté laws.



Zambia: Highly motivated voters turned out to ensure victory for opposition presidential candidate Hakainde Hichilema, overcoming obstacles that included social media shutdowns, restrictions on movement, and political violence.

Worst of the Worst

Of the 56 countries designated as Not Free, the following 16 have the worst aggregate scores for political rights and civil liberties.

Country	Aggregate Score
South Sudan	1
Syria	1
Turkmenistan	2
Eritrea	3
North Korea	3
Equatorial Guinea	5
Central African Republic	7
Saudi Arabia	7
Somalia	7
Belarus	8
Tajikistan	8
Azerbaijan	9
China	9
Libya	9
Myanmar	9
Yemen	9

Key Regional Findings

In addition to those listed above, the following countries saw developments of regional significance.

AFRICA

- Political crises and power grabs further compromised the struggle for democratic progress in Africa, most notably through the resurgence in military coups that affected Chad, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan.
- In Ethiopia, a state of emergency granted broad powers to the security forces, allowing the arbitrary detention of anyone suspected of cooperating with terrorist groups.
- Charges of terrorism and “incitement” were used to undermine press freedom across North Africa, with multiple Algerian and Egyptian journalists detained for their reporting.

AMERICAS

- In 2021, previous reforms in Honduras plus a large voter turnout resulted in the defeat of President Juan Orlando Hernández, who had been implicated in corruption and drug-trafficking scandals.
- Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro continued to prioritize his grip on power over the population’s socioeconomic well-being, and Cuban security forces violently repressed protests calling for democratic freedoms.

ASIA-PACIFIC

- In Hong Kong, prominent prodemocracy politicians were arrested at the beginning of the year for participating in primary elections designed to unify the democratic opposition, then remained behind bars during the tightly controlled Legislative Council balloting in December.
- India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party tried to limit the opposition’s ability to compete through various methods, including by pursuing selective corruption investigations.

EURASIA

- The Russian government used expanded “foreign agent” laws to sideline human rights groups and activists, culminating in an order to close the widely respected organization Memorial.
- In Belarus, authoritarian president Alyaksandr Lukashenka sought greater integration with Russia and oversaw the liquidation of more than 200 civil society organizations as he attempted to extinguish political opposition and independent civic activism.

EUROPE

- In Hungary, the parliament dealt a blow to the rights of LGBT+ people by adopting legislation that bans the portrayal or promotion of homosexuality to minors in media content and schools.

- The Polish government continued its assault on judicial independence, in part by defying an order from the European Court of Justice to disband a flawed new disciplinary chamber in Poland’s Supreme Court.

MIDDLE EAST

- While Iraq’s parliamentary elections were genuinely competitive and had fewer

irregularities than in the past, due in part to the presence of independent observers, there were still reports of vote buying, intimidation, and media suppression.

- Syrian president Bashar al-Assad won reelection with a purported 95 percent of the vote in balloting that lacked any meaningful competition.



Members of Guinean coup leader Colonel Mamady Doumbouya’s special forces arrive ahead of a meeting with representatives of the Economic Community of West African States. (Image credit: John Wessels/AFP via Getty Images)

Policy Recommendations

NURTURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

- **Turn the initial momentum of the Summit for Democracy into concrete multilateral action to strengthen democracy and confront expanding authoritarianism.** In December 2021, the Summit for Democracy focused the world's attention on the importance of, and challenges to, the promise of democracy. But if the summit is to be a true success, participating nations will need to move beyond rhetoric and undertake sustained, multilateral initiatives to strengthen democracy, in part by rethinking traditional approaches and exchanging best practices to creatively address modern challenges and opportunities.
- **Prioritize democracy-strengthening programs in foreign assistance and provide enhanced support when countries and territories face critical junctures.** When disbursing aid, democracies should select democracy support priorities with an emphasis on long-term, locally driven, and evidence-based solutions, since this type of effort has proven effective.
- **Support civil society and grassroots movements calling for democracy.** Democratic governments should provide vocal, public support for grassroots prodemocracy movements, and respond to any violent crackdown by authorities with targeted sanctions, reduced or conditioned foreign assistance, and public condemnation.

- **Support free and independent media, and protect access to information.**

Democracies should scale up efforts to support independent media—including public-interest journalism and exile media—through financial assistance and innovative financing models, technical support, skills training, and mentoring. They should also expand protections for journalists who face physical attacks and harassment, including by supporting the creation of emergency visas for those at risk.

COUNTERING THREATS TO GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

- **Guard against and combat transnational repression.** Democratic governments should work together to constrain the ability of states to commit acts of transnational repression, increase accountability by imposing multilateral sanctions on perpetrators, and restrict security assistance for states that engage in these practices. [Detailed recommendations are available here.](#)
- **Utilize targeted sanctions as part of a comprehensive strategy of accountability for human rights abusers and corrupt officials.** Democracies should devise comprehensive strategies for deploying targeted sanctions in concert with their full suite of foreign policy tools in order to ensure accountability for international human rights abuses and acts of corruption. When possible, democracies should coordinate

their efforts and jointly impose sanctions on perpetrators for maximum impact.

- **Make the fight against kleptocracy and international corruption a key priority.** In the United States, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network should identify and eliminate any loopholes in the implementation of the Corporate Transparency Act. Congress should also pass the CROOK Act (S.158/H.R.402), which would establish an action fund to offer financial assistance to foreign countries during historic windows of opportunity for anticorruption reforms, and the Combating Global Corruption Act (S.14/H.R.4322), which would require the US government to assess the extent of corruption around the world and produce a tiered list of countries.
- **Curtail assistance to nations whose leaders evade term limits.** US law blocks funding “to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup d’état or decree” until the secretary of state “can certify that a democratically elected government has taken office.” [This law should be amended to include violations of or changes to term limits](#) that allow incumbent leaders to extend their time in office.
- **Scrutinize the export of technologies and other products that could be used to violate human rights.** When considering the export of technological and other products that could be used to violate human rights, governments should carefully study deals with countries that are rated as Partly Free or Not Free by any of Freedom House’s publications.

- **Address declines in internet freedom and protect a free and open internet.** Reversing the antidemocratic transformation of today’s internet will require a focused, coordinated effort by governments, civil society, and technology companies. [Detailed recommendations on protecting internet freedom are available here.](#)

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AT HOME

- **Work at the local level to strengthen democracy.** As backsliding continues in once-established democracies, greater attention should be given to strengthening democracy at the state, provincial, territorial, and local levels. Domestically focused civil society organizations and groups focused on international democracy should work together to develop ideas for strengthening local governance in democracies, in part by exchanging best practices and applying lessons learned from their respective areas of work. Democratic governments should take up these ideas and consult with domestically focused civil society groups to identify and address institutional deficiencies with honesty and clarity.
- **Cultivate public support for democratic principles by investing in civic education.** In the United States, new legislation could require each state to develop basic content and benchmarks of achievement for civic education, including instruction on the fundamental tenets of US democracy. In the absence of new



Indigenous scholar and activist Elisa Loncón speaks after being elected as president of Chile's Constitutional Convention, which was tasked with drafting a new Chilean constitution. (Image credit: Javier Torres/AFP via Getty Images)

legislation, the US Department of Education should, to the extent possible, make funding available to states for civic education that focuses on democratic principles.

- Protect free and fair elections.** New laws on election security in the United States should not impose financial, logistical, or bureaucratic burdens that effectively perpetuate or exacerbate barriers to voting for people of color, and federal legislation should establish new criteria for determining which states and political subdivisions with a history of racially discriminatory voting rules must obtain federal clearance before implementing changes to electoral laws. Globally, democratic governments, civil society, and technology companies should work together to ensure that elections are protected from cyberattacks and politicized efforts to undermine or overturn elections.

Paper ballots, which ensure that votes have a verifiable paper trail, and independent audits with detailed audit trails, which ensure results are accurate, should be used, and independent election monitors should be present.

- Improve laws that guard against improper influence over government officials.** In the United States, this could include passing legislation to enforce the principles of the constitution's foreign emoluments clause, closing loopholes in rules on reporting foreign influence by updating lobbying and foreign agent registration rules, and updating financial disclosure requirements for elected officials.

Freedom in the World Methodology

Freedom in the World 2022 evaluates the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories during calendar year 2021. Each country and territory is assigned between 0 and 4 points on a series of 25 indicators, for an aggregate score of up to 100. The indicators are grouped into the categories of political rights (0–40) and civil liberties (0–60), whose totals are weighted equally to determine whether the country or territory has an overall status of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

The methodology, which is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is applied to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographic location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development.

Freedom in the World assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or government performance per se. Political rights and civil liberties can be affected by both state and nonstate actors, including insurgents and other armed groups.

[For complete information on the methodology, click here.](#)



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to create a world where all are free. We inform the world about threats to freedom, mobilize global action, and support democracy's defenders.

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THINK TANK

EXPERT OPINIONS

Non-Western Democracy and Its Interpretation

05.11.2021

Oleg Barabanov

How do the values of democracy affect the sovereignty of states and what are the limits of sovereignty in the context of a global value policy? Can non-Western (and actively criticised by the West) countries conduct a discourse on democracy? [Oleg Barabanov](#), Programme Director of the Valdai Club, writes about this. Recently, the Valdai Discussion Club organised a [Russian-Chinese expert dialogue](#) in partnership with CITIC Foundation for Reform and Development Studies of China, as well as the All-China Association for the Study of Political Science and the All-China Association for the Study of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; one of its sessions was devoted to democracy construction. The issues of democracy and its interpretation are now among the most acute in international relations. They are closely related to the issue of values and value policy. The key disagreement revolves around whether or not the perception of democracy should be universalist, common to all countries, and based on Western values. Various non-Western interpretations of democracy are possible, and determined by the specifics of the historical, religious, cultural and political development of individual countries. What, in this case, is meant by non-Western democracy and non-Western values; can they have a positive, independent definition, or are they characterised only by their rejection of Western models? A separate topic is the connection between the value interpretations of democracy and the right to intervene in contemporary world politics. How do the values of democracy affect the sovereignty of states, and what are the limits of sovereignty in the context of a global value policy? Finally, can non-Western countries which are actively criticised by the West generally conduct a discourse about democracy? From this point of view, indeed, a Russian-Chinese dialogue on democracy,

from the standpoint of a Western observer, may look like nonsense, an oxymoron. The features of the political systems in both countries are most often perceived in the West as purely authoritarian, and by no means democratic. On the other hand, even for the purpose of geopolitical struggle, an attempt to intercept the agenda on different understandings and interpretations of democracy is an interesting example of a value discussion and, I think, has a right to exist.

In addition, the logic of the moment pushes us to this. Joe Biden's widely announced Summit for Democracy is scheduled for the end of the year. It is not difficult to assume that China and Russia will become the main targets for criticism there. Therefore, an attempt to carry out counterplay in this field looks quite natural. It also reveals the broader context of the creation and consolidation of a kind of united front of China and Russia in the face of growing pressure from the United States. This united front can be called anti-Western or, if you will, anti-imperialist, although the terms are debatable. If such a united front is taken as a given of modern world politics (or as an expedient necessity in its context), then it is logical that China and Russia should form their own coordinated value and ideological narrative, including the issues of democracy (why not), in spite of the implicit paradox of this approach. In addition, the recent failure of the United States to promote democracy in Afghanistan provides additional evidence for this. In modern world public opinion, especially in developing countries, an interesting phenomenon can be observed. Against the background of fatigue from Western models and the human rights and tolerant discourse promoted by them, doubts have emerged about their universal effectiveness among significant social strata in the third world states (including their elites); there is a growing demand for some alternative to the Western value narrative. On the one hand, such an alternative is seen in religious norms and postulates; this is first and foremost significant for the countries of the Islamic world. On the other hand, there is a demand for a secular, not only geopolitical, but also values-based alternative. And here the eyes turn to China and Russia. This can explain the socio-psychological phenomenon of the sufficient popularity of the leaders of Russia and China in public opinion in developing countries. This symbolic popularity arose spontaneously and is somewhat paradoxical, in that often enough it isn't tied to specific politics. But it does exist, and now China and Russia need to transform this resource of symbolic popularity into an alternative value narrative that suits the public opinion of these countries. It is also clear that if we approach this issue with cynical directness, then we can always say that interest in the Chinese and Russian alternatives is demonstrated primarily by the elites of those countries which are far from everything concerning electoral democracy and human rights. And that in response to Joe Biden's formation of an alliance for democracy, an opposing alliance of dictators should also be consolidated. The plus for Russia and China is that they do not ask the presidents of other countries questions about how their elections were held, how they observe freedom of speech and how they treat their domestic political opponents. This is partly true, but on the other hand, this means non-interference in internal affairs: a principle that has not yet been erased from the UN Charter and international law. It is necessary to note the dilemma of morality and law, values and intervention, which is beginning to play an ever-increasing role in world politics. The Valdai Discussion Club has already addressed this [in its analysis](#). Indeed, if the values are universal (including the values of democracy), then it is absolutely logical to insist on their promotion to all countries of the world, and then interfering in their internal affairs is a moral necessity, and by no means a violation of the law. If values are particular and inapplicable to everyone, then interference is an exclusively a violation of the law, without any moral tolerance. The attempt by China and Russia to question the universal nature of values is precisely what they are using. But one case is simply a symbolically eventual alternative, and another is its positive content. Can China and

Russia or other protagonists of non-Western interpretations of democracy offer their significant vision of this, or will they only limit themselves to the aforementioned non-questioning of democracy with leaders of other countries? The reports of the Chinese colleagues at the aforementioned conference made it possible to form a rather holistic idea of their understanding of democracy. It is clearly based, as one might expect, on a Marxist approach. It is based on the Marxist understanding of democracy, which expresses itself through the activities of the People's Party - the Communist Party, which is the core of the political system. We will not now discuss whether this model is good or bad; the issue of the effectiveness and moral acceptability of socialism is a separate and substantial topic. For the purposes of our text, it is now more important to what extent this model can be attractive to other countries, to what extent its replication in the world is possible. If we use the already forgotten Soviet term "countries of people's democracy", then there are not so many such countries, Marxist or post-Marxist regimes in the world. However, if we add to them ideologically left-wing political regimes with a dominant party that grew out of the national liberation struggle against colonialism or neo-colonialism, then the number of such countries will increase, but in any case it is unlikely to exceed several dozen states. This gives rise to natural limits for the direct extrapolation of the Chinese model. Other countries, naturally, can use some elements of the Chinese narrative for their political purposes, but they are unlikely to do more. The concept of "sovereign democracy" put forward more than 15 years ago in Russian semi-official discourse sets a broader framework. It is based on the denial of a universalist, common understanding of democracy and its determination by local historical, cultural and other traditions. From this point of view, it is more convenient for replication as an alternative in a number of cases; therefore, we will not deny that it can serve as a culturally determined justification for anti-democratic elements in certain countries. But again, against the backdrop of the collapse of US democracy building in Afghanistan, why not. Russia itself, however, combines this promotion of the concept of sovereign democracy with the preservation of its membership in the Council of Europe and, therefore, with legal adherence to the very Western values of democracy and human rights, which are denied within the framework of sovereign democracy. When a few years ago the question arose about the advisability of preserving Russian membership in the Council of Europe in connection with the restriction of the rights of our delegation to PACE, Russia decided against withdrawal, in favour of retaining membership. If we use the Marxist semantic language that has already been repeatedly used in this text, then such an approach could be called a dialectical contradiction. But the world is a complex place. In general, in any case, we are witnessing a new stage in the value struggle around different interpretations of democracy. Here, many questions arise from every side. Can democracy and a caste system be combined, for example? Is it a democracy where Western-style free elections are combined with the caste structure of a society dominated by implicit inequality? Can electoral democracy be effective against the background of the clan or tribal structure of society in a particular state? How much do racial issues affect democracy? All these topics are complex; there is no direct answer to them. On the eve of the Summit of democracies, a new surge of not only ideological, but also geopolitical polemics around this is obvious.

Views expressed are of individual Members and Contributors, rather than the Club's, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

China issues white paper on its democracy

By: Xinhua/chinadaily.com.cn

December 4, 2021-12-04

BEIJING -- China's State Council Information Office on Saturday released a white paper titled "China: Democracy That Works."

Democracy is a common value of humanity and an ideal that has always been cherished by the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people, said the white paper.

Over the past hundred years, the Party has led the people in realizing people's democracy in China. The Chinese people now truly hold in their hands their own future and that of society and the country, said the white paper.

The people's status as masters of the country is the essence of people's democracy, it said.

China's whole-process people's democracy integrates process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people's democracy with the will of the state, it said.

It is a model of socialist democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process and all sectors of society. It is a true democracy that works, the white paper noted.

Democracy is a concrete phenomenon that is constantly evolving. Rooted in history, culture and tradition, it takes diverse forms and develops along the paths chosen by different peoples based on their exploration and innovation, it said.

Democracy is not a decorative ornament, but an instrument for addressing the issues that concern the people. Democracy is the right of the people in every country, rather than the prerogative of a few nations, the white paper noted.

Whether a country is democratic should be judged by its people, not dictated by a handful of outsiders. Whether a country is democratic should be acknowledged by the international community, not arbitrarily decided by a few self-appointed judges, it said.

There is no fixed model of democracy; it manifests itself in many forms. Assessing the myriad political systems in the world against a single yardstick and examining diverse political structures in monochrome are in themselves undemocratic, it added.

These are the highlights of the white paper:

-China creates its own democracy instead of duplicating Western models ([Read more](#))

The original aspiration of China's democracy was to ensure the people's status as masters of the country, said the white paper.

China has created and developed whole-process people's democracy in line with its national conditions. This is a form of democracy with distinctive Chinese features which at the same time reflects humanity's universal desire for democracy, said the white paper.

Whole-process people's democracy has fueled the development of the country and driven the revitalization of the nation. It has contributed a new model to the international political spectrum, said the white paper.

-Chinese people enjoy extensive, tangible democratic rights ([Read more](#))

With complete institutions and extensive participation, whole-process people's democracy has evolved from an idea into a system and mechanism of governance that has taken root in the soil of Chinese society and become part of people's lives, said the white paper.

China's political power is not linked in any way with personal status, wealth, or social relations, but is equally enjoyed by all the people. The state power serves the people, rather than capital, it said.

High-quality democracy in China has improved the system, capacity and efficiency of national governance, it said.

Democracy in China means people-centered development that fully mobilizes the initiative of the people, relies on their strength, and ensures that all share in the benefits, it said.

-White paper details complete system of whole-process people's democracy ([Read more](#))

Whole-process people's democracy involves complete institutional procedures, the white paper said, adding that these well-coordinated and comprehensive institutional procedures serve to put into place diverse, open, and well-organized democratic channels to ensure that the Party's policies and the state will be integrated with the people's aspirations, and that the people are masters of the country.

-China's democracy has concrete, pragmatic practices ([Read more](#))

Whole-process people's democracy in China has concrete and pragmatic practices, and has been fully tested through wide participation, said the white paper.

Whole-process people's democracy is a combination of electoral democracy and consultative democracy and is applied through a combination of elections, consultations, decision-making, management and oversight, according to the white paper.

-White paper expounds on China's whole-process people's democracy under CPC leadership ([Read more](#))

Whole-process people's democracy is a creation of the CPC in leading the people to pursue, develop and realize democracy, embodying the Party's innovation in advancing China's democratic theories, systems and practices, said the white paper.

The Party's history of struggle is a course of rallying the people and leading them to explore, establish and develop whole-process people's democracy, said the white paper.

It is a logical outcome of history, theory and practice based on the strenuous efforts of the people under the leadership of the Party. It is a requisite for maintaining the very nature of the Party and fulfilling its fundamental purpose, the document said.

[Full Text: China: Democracy That Works](#)